

SEPTEMBER 1956 50c

CABARET

THE ADULT ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

**THE WORLD'S
RAWEST
BURLESQUE SHOW**

**ARE EUROPEAN
SINGERS SEXIER?**

**WHERE
TO GO FOR
NIGHT LIFE
IN 9 CITIES**



I STRIPPED AT 16

COVER

MONIQUE VAN VOOREN is that popular European breed known as *chanteuse*. The Belgian-born doll tried her hand at emoting in Tarzan movies before moving into the night club spotlight and becoming a big name vocalist at big hotel rooms from coast to coast. She's a positive argument in the debate over whether European singers are sexier. Capturing her charms in color for our cover was Bruno Bernard.



SHOWGIRL OF THE MONTH



PEGGY RAY is one of the new TV species—a commercial girl. With good looks and charms, she helps sell anything from cigarettes to deodorants. In between she takes showgirl assignments on shows such as Jackie Gleason's and enjoys what wide open spaces she can find around New York City.

AMONG the pundits who cover the bright-light beat along Broadway, Robert Sylvester is not exactly a youngster but he is a relative neophyte as a columnist, having joined the ranks little more than a year ago. However, his sprightly contribution to the pages of the New York Daily News have made him one of the most-read chroniclers in the biggest newspaper in the land in terms of circulation. This month he furnishes a report to CABARET readers on the two most exclusive niteries in America, the ultra-ultra Stork and El Morocco. Sylvester probes deeply in the profit motives of the two bonifaces who run the clubs and comes

up with a humorous yet highly sober account.

Covering the full gamut of the night life whirl, CABARET also x-rays the other extreme of the world of entertainment and takes readers down to Cuba to have a look-see at "The World's Rawest Burlesque Show." Variety mugg Jay Mallin gives a full and authentic report on what he found at the Havana showspot that combines totally-nude girls somewhat on the beefy side cavorting on stage between showings of stag movies. It's a delightful tale that points up the idea that CABARET furnishes readers a full-rounded picture of the world after dark and its well-rounded dolls.

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AMERICA'S MOST ELITE NIGHT CLUBS

No niteries in land draw as rich and exclusive a clientele as Stork and El Morocco clubs in New York and no two entrepreneurs prove as different as owners Sherman Billingsley and John Perona.

By Robert Sylvester



TOP CELEBRITIES in land make Stork Club their headquarters. Room has simple decor with orchestra playing soft music.



REGULAR AT STORK CLUB'S TABLE 50 is columnist Walter Winchell, who picks up many items from owner Sherman Billingsley. He has never advertised his club except in early years when he ran ads in college publications, paid editors in drinks.



THE BIGGEST CITY in America, New York, has the most wealth, the most established socialites and the most celebrities. One might suppose that New York is the sort of town which would have a dozen or more internationally-famous and steadily-successful "class" night clubs filled nightly with the rich and important only. It is one of the anomalies of night club history that, over the long haul, only two New York night clubs have consistently been able to draw support from what is accepted as The Elite.

These two night clubs are the Stork Club and El Morocco.

New York has many class restaurants with clientele as fancy or fancier than these cafes and New York has many first-class cabarets—the Versailles and the Copacabana are but two—yet no night club has been able to threaten the eminence or "exclusiveness" of Stork and El Morocco.

This is a fact which is far from easy to analyze or explain. If the Stork had succeeded in knocking out Morocco, or vice versa, it would be relatively simple to trace the methods, rules and modus operandi of the victorious joint and set down a diagram of how a truly exclusive and chi-chi night club must be planned and developed. The



EL MOROCCO OWNER Jule Perna likes to wear formal clothes, insist on patrons being as well-dressed as he is in club.



STORK CLUB OWNER Sherman Billingley occupies seven floors of building. One whole floor is taken by bookkeepers.



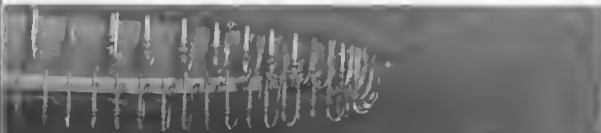
DOORMAN at El Morocco is Harlem Negro dressed in uniform of native Moroccan soldier. Perona originally decided on simple one-piece door because he did not want sprakeasy furnishings that trips could smash.

FOREIGN LEGION UNIFORM is worn by attendant at El Morocco to carry out club's theme. Blue and white zigzag zebra stripes are prevailing background. Perona maintains small office next to club kitchen.

confusing truth, however, is that there could not be two night clubs more different than the Stork and El Morocco. They have, indeed, only one characteristic in common. Each is not only owned and operated by a single personality, but, in all truth, each is fiercely dominated by a personality. All other comparisons end there.

The Stork Club is owned by Sherman Billingsley. El Morocco is owned by John Perona. They are the most successful night club men in the history of the trade but the analyst who attempts to discover the secret of night club success through a study of these boys together can only be completely confused by his findings. For two more different men never existed and the café creation of each absolutely and completely negates the thinking, the management, the planning and the theories of the other.

John Perona is a self-made millionaire of Italian birth. He wears soft, striped flannels of Beau Brummel cut, chalkstriped or pinstriped. His jewelry is delicate and expensive. He is grey.



EL MOROCCO INTERIOR reflects plush clientele. Club is one of few which seats celebrities near wall away from dance floor to escape attention of public. Perona claims that lighting in club is flattering to women guests. Zebra stripes have become trademark.

haired and reasonably handsome in the European fashion. His mannerisms are quick, nervous and even jerky. He talks fast and often excitedly. He obviously possesses physical energy in inexhaustible volume. He is gregarious, likes high life, and is not averse to joining his cronies in tipping the wine bottle. He owns several foreign cars, in the past raced them himself, and he is a gentleman farmer who gets an atavistic joy out of growing things from the soil. He is 53 years old.

Sherman Billingsley is a self-made millionaire from Enid, Oklahoma. He wears solid color suits of conservative, almost shapeless cut. He is now nearly bald and handsome like the model in the successful businessman ads is handsome. His mannerisms are deliberate. His walk and talk are controlled and slow. His manner usually suggests that he is tired, or even exhausted. Although one of the most famous hosts in epicurean history, he is not gregarious and usually is remote even with customers of long standing. His close friends are few. His hobbies fewer. He is a gentleman farmer who for years has been thoroughly bored with his farm and wishes he could unload it. He has the veteran saloon manager's wariness toward alcohol and rarely drinks. He is 54 years old.

The habits, histories and thinking of the two men are as divergent as their personalities. First for their habits:

Perona daily keeps what he rather wishfully refers to as his "banking hours." This means that he is awake, dressed, and on his feet in time to take



CROWDS often gather around Stark Club marquee to watch celebrities enter. Billingsley used to stage his television program directly from one of upper floors of building he owns.



CUB ROOM is Stark's guarded inner sanctum reserved for special guests who are either celebrities or personal friends of Billingsley. Room is closely guarded by owner.



GLAMOUR GIRLS have always been catered to by Billingsley, who likes to decorate his room with lavishes. He used many of them on his television show, which is now off the air. One entire floor of building is taken up by refrigerators and freezers for food.



TOMMY MANVILLE, much divorced playboy, is one of many celebrities who make Stork their permanent night headquarters.



CHINESE IMPORTER H. L. Usieh and his wife, **Marion Saunders**, typify wealthy guests always seen nightly at El Morocco.



PARTY OF CELEBRITIES including author Ernest Hemingway and wife, Mrs. Leland Hayward, Spencer Tracy, George Jessel and producer Leland Hayward join in Stork drink.

an active personal part in buying and selling stocks at his brokerage. He never appears at his office until after the stock market has closed for the day. Even then he finds many distractions to keep his mind from the business of El Morocco. He may spend the late afternoon and dinner hour sitting for a portrait by Salvador Dali. He may go for a spin in some new foreign car he owns. Or, if some exciting news story is in progress, he may merely stay home and listen to one of dozens of radios which are on every table and flit surface in his New Jersey home. There are, incidentally, no known telephones in his Jersey home. The caller who phones Perona at El Morocco in the late afternoon is usually told to call back "after nine o'clock tonight." El Morocco, of course, does not open for either lunch or cocktails. It is purely a supper club.

Billingsley gets up later or earlier, according to the whim of the day, but from the moment he opens his eyes his every thought and act concerns the Stork Club. Today he may be at his club for lunch—when the place opens for business—or he may not be in until after cock. (Continued on page 48)



JOAN CRAWFORD joins friend **Manny Sarks** in cocktails at the Stork and is presented by gift of perfume by owner Billingsley.



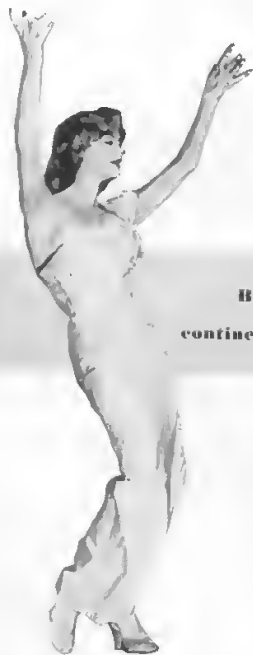
MANY MOVIE ROMANCES get started at Stork. Here **Elizabeth Taylor** holds hands with her first husband, **Conrad Hilton, Jr.**

ARE EUROPEAN SINGERS SEXIER?

MONIQUE VAN VOOREN has sexy, voluptuous look whether projecting through television screen or singing in club (below).



Belgium's busty entry in chanteuse stakes demonstrates why continental canaries can so much more sexily than our own breed.



By Mort Cooper

IN THE PLUSH, svelte satin-lined cabaret world that is found in the nation's better hostelrys patronized by the upper brackets, a most pleasant institution has blossomed out in our generation known as the *chanteuse*. To the top-hatted gentry and even the hourglass-shaped dowagers who foot

the tab at these swank rooms, the *chanteuse* is supposed to represent a bit of nostalgia from the old world, a chunk of the continent imparted to our shores without benefit of ocean spray.

But the gents who keep book in these hotel halls of revelry know better.



SAUCY AND PROVOCATIVE, Monique prefers shortie nightgowns whether in bed or posing for cheesecake photos. She will be seen in running film, "Martin & Lewis In Paris."



IN TELEVISION REGULARLY, Monique plays roles as temptress. She does not mind being type-cast in that role with or without clothes (right), more played in Tarzan films.

To them the word *chanteuse* can be spelled in three letters: s-e-x. For over the years they have learned that the young ladies from foreign shores who come to con hallalls to our hotel patrons symbolize a basic instinct that adds up to the lowest common denominator in mankind. They can see in the response to these canaries something far different than what happens when our own native brand of vocalist belts out a pop tune.

It is not necessarily that the foreign lassies are more attractive or prettier but rather that they know how to project a certain quality that adds up to that ethereal quality known as sex appeal. The *chanteuse* art as practiced on these shores by a succession of *fil d'amour* such as Edith Piaf, Putaclicou, Genevieve, Jacqueline Francis adds up to a kind of perfumy, go-la-la sex. It is the difference between a honk and a belmont.

And well-heeled customers in the ultra-ultra spots across the nation love it as a welcome relief from the braying of the likes of Kay Starr and Theresa Brewer. This desire to enjoy the continental style of singing of unrequited love has brought a variety of imports





DECORATING SWIMMING POOL when playing night club engagement at Las Vegas Thunderbird Hotel, Monique knows just how to pose for poolside photos draped only in towel. She recently played in "Kismet," has starred in TV productions on Studio One.

across the waters, who are enjoying a full measure of prosperity on the night club circuits.

A case in point is a husky Belgian named Monique Van Voutren, who is not particularly a .400 batter when it comes to voice but who can just stand in a room and ooze sex. Whether the customers ever hear what she sings is questionable but whatever it is that she has, the patrons from the Maisonette in New York to the Mocambo in Hollywood love it.

And Monique knows it. She is absolutely crazy—as the hip set would say—but like a Belgian fox.

Sitting in her Manhattan living room and cuddling Foudy, her white poodle ("He doesn't have my bust measurements," she advises, "but then after all he's only a dog"), wit and refined suggestiveness roll off her tongue without the slightest hint of having been rehearsed. Instead of meeting a gorgeous but dumb show-girl who happened to be professionally lucky, one finds himself face to face with a gorgeous but extremely intelligent and sensitive young lady.

Monique's star has never been so high as it is today and if she is able to commit herself to a third of the offers which have come to her since her sensational hit at the St. Regis Maisonette, there's little doubt that she can become the hottest item in show business. She kids her own singing and dancing, but she knows how to acquit herself on a stage or at a mike. Her face is exquisite. Her 40-24-36 architecture is for real. She speaks English, French, Italian, Flemish and German, and can be funny and sexy in all of them.

Her answers to provocative questions are her own, not press agents': "I love caviar by the spoonful (does that make me a red?)—but only black caviar, and only if it matches my satin bed-sheets which must also be black. I can't stand yellow diamonds, but I enjoy minks in all colors. I used to have the hobby of collecting diamonds, by the way. Kind people gave them to me. Usually very kind people. I called that hobby my Bundles For Belgium campaign."

There's certainly nothing elusive about the blonde Belgian beauty's work at a mike. Her gowns are usually white and tight, the better to not only display a classically voluptuous body from the front but to display, when she gets fairly frisky (*Continued on page 46*)



IN FRENCH MOVIE, Monique was allowed to display a lot more of her talents than in Hollywood appearances. She paraded about in "Serie Noire" in bras and towels, got favorable notices for beauty. She appeared in three French films.



OUTDOOR GIRL despite her bonnair tastes, Monique enjoys pool in Las Vegas. She like Vegas dates to enjoy swimming.



FURS AND SATIN SHEETS are favorites of Monique, who had 15-minute TV show nights in New York interviewing stars.

HOW TO RUN A NIGHT CLUB AND MAKE MONEY



By presenting strippers in class atmosphere, including a tropical storm every hour, serving best food in any U.S. club and charging reasonable prices, Warren St. Thomas makes a highly-profitable business out of his Tropics cabaret.

By Jacques Sorloff

TEN YEARS AGO a dapper, energetic young man still in his twenties brought a quarter million dollars to the mile-high city of Denver and promised that within six weeks he would turn a foundering neighborhood tavern site into Colorado's plushiest night club. He hired 60 men to work all day, every day, paid them time and a half after 4:30 and double time on Sundays. In 180 days, hardly more time than it took to create the earth, that property on

Morrison Road was demolished and re-erected as the Tropics.

Almost at once—with the considerable help of instinctive business knowhow gimmicks, not the least of which was in sense just how to present strip teasers effectively in a class atmosphere—the Tropics became and has remained the most beautiful, popular and successful club in the entire Rocky Mountain area.



TROPICS OWNER WARREN ST. THOMAS enjoys playing with alligators before they are fed in Alligator Room of night club. Customers usually gather round to see alligators fed expensive \$15 meal of goldfish daily in room with ultra-modern decor.



SALLY RAND has been regular favorite at Tropics since its opening. She is probably oldest stripper to perform in nitery.



WILDCAT FRENCHIE was sizzling import from New Orleans. Redhead was presented in "hottest dance seen on Bourbon Street."

The fellow responsible for this success in a jiffy was Warren St. Thomas, a high tension man whose career has included minefield charting as a Navy lieutenant commander and running an amusement park concession. A tall and robustly husky guy whose brain percolates new ideas continuously, he has never entered any project with half a heart or with the remotest doubts of instantaneous success.

Overnight St. Thomas became night club king of Denver. And he did it while defying the set rules followed by cabarets all over the country. He has consistently presented top names at his club—but not singers, comics or dancers. Rather his stars have all been strippers.

Nowhere in the world are strippers featured in as plush a club as the Tropics. And nowhere does as upper-bracket a crowd of celebrities come to watch them perform. St. Thomas is especially proud of the calibre of customers who visit his cabaret—Ethel Merman, Marilyn Munroe, Harry James, Fred Waring, Denver judges and members of the state legislature. Normally these people would not go out of their way to see a burlesque show but they do come to see the equivalent of such shows at the Tropics. "The secret is simple," St. Thomas explains. "Just have a setting of class if you want a night club jackpot. Sure, our shows are risqué; now and then when we have headliners like Ricki Covette or Do May the spice runs pretty high. But I've yet to hear a woman customer complain of being offended by a show here. Maybe it's because we never stop working to keep the Tropics a mixture of earthy fun and the height of taste in decor and management."

And St. Thomas does have all that.

In what other club, for instance, which demands neither cover charge nor minimum (except a stupendous half dollar on Saturday nights), can you see tropical storms,



REVERE AND ROCHE do popular girl and ape act which always thrills audiences. Owner St. Thomas draws top local reels.



UNUSUAL EXOTIC ACTS are sought by owner St. Thomas and Indian stripper Do May conforms to his exotic formula.



BLONDE BUBBLE BATHIE Pat Holman is regular feature at least once a year at Tropics. Her act fits in with tropical concept.

consisting of electrical illusions, scenic effects, and real water disappearing into drains and containers that appear to be bannisters?

The Tropics has real palm trees. There are six foia voodoo masks (which St. Thomas makes himself) lining the walls. There is an Alligator Room, a very special feature which boasts light black walls, a design that is carried out and lit up with strong black lights. Modernistic wind-looking trees are built up in relief. Built into the floor is a long cement pit containing two live alligators. In keeping with the swank atmosphere, the alligators are fed goldfish (an expensive dinner which costs the management \$15 per feeding).

During the summer, a large sliding glass wall opens onto an outdoor dance floor and garden.

Inside the club, the hydraulic stage lifts to any height up to six feet and on this stage, throughout the year, the best-known strippers appear. Any night a headline peeler is grinding, winding, rotating and bumping—and at popular prices, too.

Despite a large staff, St. Thomas personally oversees

everything that goes on from the evening's opening till its close. "Denver was ready for a volume club when I came on the scene," he says. "That means a club that offers everything a visitor could imagine, and at prices that wouldn't send him away screaming into the night. I believe in avoiding anything that doesn't smack of top quality and of selling that quality at considerate prices. A customer who comes to the Tropics always returns because he knows he's going to have the time of his life, without being rolled in the bargain."

What constitutes the time of one's life? St. Thomas obviously has the answer, because in the ten years his doors have been open, he has had a steady and overflowing patronage. Notary bunifaces throughout the United States invariably show up at the Tropics as they pass through the West, to study this remarkable success story and to see how they too might prosper.

Name strippers like to work the beautiful Denver spot because St. Thomas is at the helm, which means they are guaranteed of getting limitless production cooperation. Evelyn West, the \$50,000 Treasure Chest who played the



HIGHEST SALARY ever paid a stripper was given to Evelyn West when she exhibited her "550,000 Treasure Chest" at Denver's most picturesque night club.

FAVORITE CLUB of Evelyn West, Tropics is also preferred by other strippers because of excellent production facilities and fine lighting at lavish Denver bistro.



PERFORMING AT ORGAN in club is Donna St. Thomas, attractive wife of owner. Couple has daughter, big swimming pool.

Tropics recently and far exceeded the business brought in by Sally Rand, Tempest Storm, Carrie Finnell and Do May (all Tropics' regulars), is especially laudatory of him:

"Warren is not a saloonkeeper or a strip joint owner. He is a creative artist who might have been an outstanding designer, painter or architect, but who happens to run the world's most exciting night club. He's the exotic dancer's dream. He's a master showman.

"He doesn't just provide a stage for a dancer, he sees to it that she has everything in the way of special lighting that will make for a better performance. He designed the stage and lighting system in such a way that a performer is able to be seen by everyone in the large room—an incidental fact that makes some performers hesitate about playing other clubs. But there's never any hesitation when the Tropics summons."

While patrons watch the minimum of four strippers who appear nightly, and watch in an atmosphere lush with luxury, they also eat what some professional observers have called the best food to be found in an American club. St. Thomas doesn't hither with the standard chow mein and





OUTDOOR PATIO of club has dance floor where couples can enjoy music under stars. With mild weather, it is in constant use.



ENTRANCE LOBBY of Tropics has comfortably wicker-type chairs where patrons can enjoy drink at ruffee table while waiting.

glorified hamburgers which some of the most elegant niteries feel free to serve. He bastes his chicken with champagne and prepares his lamb on flaming swords.

The steaks he sells deserve some special comment. He carefully ages them, then broils them over hot ceramic rocks. The ceramic arrangement consists of ordinary gas burners placed under volcanic rocks which get red hot like charcoal and hold their heat. The steaks are broiled over these rocks on steel bars and singed in fire produced from

their own fat. It's a complicated process but a rewarding one. Unlike a large percentage of club owners, St. Thomas plays up rather than hides the fact that he sells food.

Semi-classical and lounge piano artists have played the Tropics and have gone over well but, St. Thomas admits, "It cost me a lot of money to learn that the public prefers the strip tease. I give it to them, along with good food, drinks, and an exciting background, and they keep coming back for more." (Continued on page 47)



LEOPARD-SKIN OUTFITS are worn by waitresses at Tropics. Much of decor is also done in zebra stripes. St. Thomas has big turnover of patrons with as many as four shows nightly. He also presents a show on Sunday afternoon at 5, charges no minimum or cover.



"She made the mistake of crossing her fingers instead of her legs!"



DANCE TEAM of Lopez and Romero do apache number in which he strips the costume off Conchita. She finishes her dance nude.



MANAGER Jose Orozco Garcia has run Shanghai for 21 years. claims it is only place in world where stag movies are shown publicly.

THE

WORLD'S

RAWEST BURLESQUE SHOW



GIRLS OF ALL NATIONALITIES, shapes and sizes work in Shanghai. In many movies, girls remove costumes behind props like cardboard loonies and then step forward.

Nowhere can public see as ribald and
raucy a show as in Havana, where patrons
see combined stag movies and strip tease.

By Jay Mullin

FOR A LONG TIME, Havana has enjoyed the reputation of being the sexiest city in the Western hemisphere. To nearly everyone—and Americans especially—her main commodities have been rum, cigars and women.

But the Americano expecting to find the ultimate in wickedness in Havana will be disappointed in at least one respect. The famed capital of Latin vice has only one burlesque house. It is the Shanghai Theater, located appropriately enough in Chinatown, among the narrow, winding streets of old Havana.

But if it's small in numbers, Cuban burlesque more than makes up for it in punch. There is probably nothing—including the rawest of Parisian shows—that is quite as raw as the peculiar combination of blackout skits, sexy dancers and stag movies that make up the Shanghai bill.

There have been other burlesque houses in the city, but over the years they have succumbed to the onslaught of the law. The Shanghai, however, continues to operate and pack 'em in every night as it has for the past 24 years.

"We close only for revolutions," says Jose Orozco Garcia, a paunchy, affable fellow with a big cigar and the tailoring of a syndicate hood, including fedora. He has managed the house since it opened. "We aren't bothered by anything else," he says, smiling as he fingers his diamond stickpin.

A shabby, hulking building on Zanja Street, between Manrique and Campanario, the theater was originally built as a home for oriental drama. In spite of a large Chinese population, the art form fell on evil days, however, and the theater changed hands to become a burlesque hall.

Seats range in price from 65 cents for a bench in the



TRADITIONAL RHUMBA is also part of Shanghai show, but always winds up with strip act that leaves dancer mimics G-string.



BOX OFFICE at Shanghai has sign in English which advertises: "Nude dancers with 8 beautiful girls, 1000 naked models."

balcony to \$1.25 for a stage-side chair. Inside, the house is surprisingly large. It seats 750—400 on the main floor and 350 in the balcony.

The audience is almost entirely male. It's a rare occasion in more ways than one when a curious *tourista* appears on the arm of an escort to see the show.

Groups of society women do however occasionally don masks and watch the proceedings from boxes discreetly ranged along the side of the house.

But everyone is much more comfortable when there are no ladies in the audience. This is not so much a delicacy, but because weak-stomached American maidens have had to be carried from the house in a semi-hysterical state after seeing part of the show. Just the same, Garcia sees to it that when a woman does come, she is treated with due respect.

"This is a nice place," he says. "We never have any trouble with the tourists. They like it very much, and we are happy to have them."

The rest of the audience—in fact the major part—is native in the peculiarly cosmopolitan fashion of Havana. Any night the house will be filled with Chinese, Spanish, Negro, Cuban and a half-dozen other nationality groups, and from all strata of society. "Everybody in Havana knows the Shanghai," Garcia says proudly. "And everybody comes here."

What they find is a show that is unique among even the most unusual Havana entertainment. The program is a combination of American bur- (Continued on page 44)



COMIC RELAXES backstage with some of Shanghai's chorines, who have tendency to be very leery like many of Cuba's girls.

TO
STAGE



Troop

"For some reason or other, they bill me as a double feature."

THE GREAT ALL-AMERICAN



First made by a Kentucky
reverend, native wine
of blue grass state has
become favorite drink
of nation but still is
a proud tradition in land
of corn and colonels.



INSTITUTION OF BOURBON



By Harry Rotsford

BOURBON is an all-American institution of native corn, rye and wheat, sprouted barley, thoroughbred yeast and limestone water, plus skill, experience and some special and intricate equipment. In a glass of this amber ambrosia there lurks grandeur, renaissance, achievement and American history that will never be forgotten. It has been that way since the first Bourbon was made by the Reverend Elijah Craig of Georgetown, Kentucky, in 1789.

It became the favorite tipple of two famous Daniels—Webster and Boone. It was acclaimed by Davy Crockett, Henry Clay, and a host of robust men in every walk of life; statesmen, explorers, soldiers and sailors, industrial leaders and educators, to say nothing of prominent members of the clergy.

Bourbon's originator, the Reverend Craig, was a deeply religious man. He hated the economic waste that he observed in Kentucky, which grew enormous crops of fine corn that lacked transportation. Kentucky needed markets for its native produce, he knew. The abundant corn fattened the droves of hogs and from them was processed what was—and is—about the finest salt-cured ham

in the world, so good that currently they rival the famous Smithfield hams of Virginia. But the market for both hams and corns was a purely local one. And the corn was difficult to transport in bulk. If the corn could be reduced in volume, it would be easier to transport.

The Reverend Elijah did some deep thinking, came up with the idea of distilling a whiskey which he decided to call Bourbon after a county in Kentucky. He overlooked the main asset in the proposed venture, limestone water. An abundance of it spouts from hillsides and it is so strongly infused with limestone that it is slightly milky. It proved to be ideal in making bourbon. The mash was cooled in it; it was used to cool the coils and stills; and it imparted an unappreciated smoothness to the distillate. As the Reverend Elijah looked over the land appraisingly, he discerned another asset that was convenient and cheap—an abundance of white oak for the staves needed to make the charred barrels in which the whiskey could be stored, aged and colored to a deep amber.

His venture took on stature, became prosperous. Naturally, others followed suit, and soon there were many

distilleries in operation in Kentucky. The whiskey was aged according to the whim of the early distillers, sold in kegs and barrels to saloons and general stores. The distillers gave the buyers bottles in which to draw off the whiskey for what we now call off-premises consumption.

The ugly head of competition became visible and claims for purity, age and smoothness were made and matched with great readiness by various distillers. Salesmen of the distillers were not without guile. They invariably carried a pocket of iron 10-penny nails and it was their wont to slip a few of these into the barrels of bourbon made by a competitor. Presently, customers would swallow a dipperful of bourbon from their favorite barrel, clutch their throats and scream and cuss that they had been poisoned. Bourbon, it seemed, became acid-like liquid when exposed to iron.

At such times, the owner of the establishment where the tragedy occurred would pour himself a dipper of bourbon and take a healthy slug. To the horror of the proprietor, he discovered that the victims had not been fooling. They certainly had a derided grievance. Another keg or barrel from the same distillery was opened, free drinks were served and the bourbon was pronounced perfect. Saloon owners and storekeepers took a long time to discover the cause of the trouble, and by this time, the practice had become general.

In spite of crude distillation methods, bourbon literally became the native wine of Kentucky. It was made elsewhere, in fact almost any place where corn would grow, where the springs gushed the famous limestone water, but there was a concentration in Kentucky. The concentration is as simple as Detroit being the car center of the world and Akron becoming the tire kingdom.

Bourbon became an integral part of the social life of Kentucky. Wherever it was consumed, it was respected and held in high affection. Enormous punchbowls of a fascinating blend of bourbon and fruit juices were common features at the grand balls, the gay parties held in city mansions, the hospitable plantation houses.

The hunt breakfast became a tradition of the period. The yards of plantation homes were filled with stamping horses, with women correctly habited, gracious and lovely, full of sparkle and life—with tall lean men whose riding boots had a dull gleam, who were correct and polite.

Two things featured the hunt breakfast. There were glasses of whiskey sour, composed of bourbon as a starter, for this was before the day of orange and vegetable juices. There would be a vast and succulent baked ham on the sideboard, a Negro slave who sliced it paper thin. There would be relays of beaten biscuits, seeds of honey and home-made jams, eggs any way the guests preferred them. It was a leisurely meal, a dignified repast, eaten standing up, for the tight breeches of the men made it difficult for them to sit down. There would be a final cup of coffee and the conversational din would

rise in tempo. Outside the impatient hounds would raise their voice in eager competition, the riderless horses would prance. All mounted, the departing guests would take a stirrup cup of good bourbon. There would be a clatter of hooves, the crack of the whip from the master of the fox hounds, and the hunt was officially launched, Yoicks!

It is said that Kentucky had—and still has—a plethora of colonels, but a few of whom had been titled by an act of the legislature, or named by the governor, an honorary title. The traditional colonel was a spare old man; he sported a white goatee of distinguished size, his apparel was neat, he was always pictured lounging on the pillared porch of a country plantation, gazing with deep satisfaction across white fenced fields of blue grass in which capered thoroughbred colts, their sedate mothers. The picture of ease, he relaxed almost continuously, sipping ever and anon from a frosted silver mug of mint julep.

And well he might have for the Kentucky julep is a thing, apart. The method has come down through the ages without change. It is simple to make and it has great virtue. Duels were fought by Kentucky gentlemen against Virginians, the natives of Tennessee, Marylanders and others who clung to an alien school of thought as to what they believed to be a proper ceremonial julep.

A Kentucky Senator was invited to a soiree in Washington at the home of a famous hostess. He was offered a julep, tasted it, and his face turned a fiery red, and he choked a little. He hastily excused himself, left the party muttering about the sheer treason of anyone who tried so unsuccessfully to duplicate the true Kentucky julep. A man of firm conviction, he rejected all further invitations to this home, regarded it as off bounds for any true Kentuckian.

The true son of Kentucky is a self-appointed judge of good bourbon. He can't be fooled, for this is an inherited wisdom as a rule. He knows, or example, that bottled-in-bond is not a guarantee of goodness, but of alcoholic strength. It is a government designation meaning that in addition to being a true bourbon distilled at the proper proof, aged in the right kind of barrels, it has been kept in those barrels for a minimum of 4 years, not more than 6 years. It is whiskey that must be the product of one distillery, and made in the fall or spring of the same year.

It must be bottled at 100 proof, no more, no less.

The judge of bourbon bases his firm opinions on the following:

- (1) The bead
- (2) The cling
- (3) The empty glass
- (4) The palm
- (5) The sip

The judge will take a bottle of bourbon, shake it gently, delightedly watch the bubbles rise and break. The richer the bead, the longer it will last.

As for the cling, a goblet is partially filled with bourbon, the glass is slowly twirled between the palms, forcing the whiskey up along the sides. The glass is then held stationary. The dribbles will gather, slowly (*continued on page 43*)





"Lucky Joyce, she's collecting workmen's compensation. She bucked into a sizzling platter!"



COMPARISONS of Marilyn Monroe to late movie star Jean Harlow are resented by rising burlesque queen June Harlow (right), who claims that she looks more like her famous aunt. 20th Century-Fox studio is planning to make film biography of Jean Harlow next year with Marilyn playing the sexy screen star who died in late 30's.

JUNE HARLOW NAKED AMAZON

I STRIPPED AT 16

By June Harlow

Niece of famed movie
platinum blonde tells how
she started in burlesque
at early age because those
are girl's 'best years.'

I STARTED stripping when I was 16 years old.

People sometimes look shocked when I tell them that. They wonder how a "mere child," as they call me, could even think in her teens of making her living as a stripper. They wonder what effect it had on my morals. And then they shake their heads in disbelief even more when they learn that my aunt was the famous movie star, Jean Harlow, and that I began stripping at 16 because I figured that was the easiest way to follow in her footsteps in show business.

And then the final crusher comes when they find out that I got married when I was 17—and that my husband

IN FRONT OF MARQUEE at Chicago theater where she is featured, June Harlow displays beauty that resembles her famed aunt, late star Jean Harlow.

CABARET



QUEEN OF THE MONTH

June Harlow

... She dreams of following
her aunt, Jean Harlow and
becoming Hollywood star.





IN PHOTO STUDIO, June proves excellent model as well as talented stripper. She has had bit parts in several movies, including "Twelve Mile Reef" and "City That Never Sleeps."



LONG SLENDER legs and shapely torso were developed by June after long reducing diet. She likes to act as glamour girl (below) even when she goes to bed after long night's stage work.



is a brother of famed baseball great Joe DiMaggio.

I guess that it all does add up to something startling to people who live a sheltered life. But as far as I'm concerned, I don't regret any of it for one little minute. In fact I'm very happy that I started stripping when I was "sweet sixteen," a time when some girls just start dating. My early start means that I haven't wasted any of my "best years."

And certainly a girl has her "best years" and that applies particularly to strippers. Today a girl is old in stripping by the time she is 25. If she hasn't made it by then, she might as well give up. Sure, there are some who last longer—gals like Carrie Finnell or Gypsy Rose Lee or Sally Band. But they aren't making it any more on what they show but rather how they show it—or what's left of it.

They are the exceptions that prove the rule. For the ordinary girl, the best years are the young years when you don't have to worry about stretch, sag or slump.

They're the years when you have your greatest appeal for audiences, and believe me, unless you're a Gypsy or a Carrie, you haven't got a chance when you lose that. Starting early has brought me to the point where today, at 18, I am the youngest featured performer in burlesque. I have my whole career before me, and I'm already half way up the ladder.

I have plenty of time to make it the rest of the way to the top. I don't



JUNE LIKES TO PORTRAY THEMES in her numbers. Two contrasting motifs are presented in American Beauty Rose number in which she is clad in rose costume and tosses fresh roses to audience. In another she does rat dance (left). "I try to portray something in my numbers," she says. "I don't just come out and take off all my clothes just for the sake of being undressed."



IN DRESSING, June puts on a show, too. June believes girl should learn how to undress gracefully before husband and practices the art herself.



PREPARING BREAKFAST for husband is regular chore for June. Her marriage to Anthony DiMaggio combined two famous families—the baseball DiMaggios and the acting Harlows.



HELPING HAND with costume is given June by hubby before she goes on stage. He acts as master of ceremonies for her strip tease act in many clubs.



READY FOR STAGE ENTRANCE, June makes her way up stairway from basement dressing room at Follies Theater in Chicago, where she was headliner.

know if I'll last beyond 25, but by that time I hope I won't have to worry about it, I'll have it made.

No, I don't regret starting early at all, and my advice to any girl who is thinking of show business as a career would be: start early.

How does a girl get started as a stripper at the age of 16? That's not an easy one to answer for other girls. But I can tell how it happened to me.

My aunt was the late Jean Harlow, who is still famous as the most beautiful movie star of the 1930's, and the original "platinum blonde." Aunt Jean died of uremic poisoning, not in an airplane crash, as many people think—just a year before I was born. I never knew her personally, and it is one of the greatest regrets of my life. But her personality was constantly present throughout my childhood. My relatives talked about her a lot, and every so often someone would look at me and say: "Little June takes after her aunt. When she grows up, she'll probably lullow in her footsteps."

Then they would turn to me and say, "How would you like to be a big movie star, honey?"

There was never any question in my mind what I was going to be when I grew up. I was going to be a big movie star just like Aunt Jean. It's an ambition I still cherish, and one that I am constantly working to achieve.

As time passed, however, it became pretty plain that there was one big catch to my ambitions about show business. To put it bluntly, I grew up fat and not at all pretty. Somehow, my baby resemblance to Aunt Jean faded, and instead of her delicate features and slender limbs, I found myself with a round, snub-nosed face and pudgy figure.

I began to feel like an ugly duckling. The talk about my great career somehow faded out of the family conversations.

It didn't get any better when, at 13, I left home in Kansas City to go to live with my married sister in St. Louis. I began to feel desperate. School got less and less interesting. The future seemed hopeless.

Then one day I read an ad in the paper that said, "Girls Wanted—No Experience Necessary." It was put in by the manager of a show lounge on Chestnut Street in St. Louis, where I was living. So, I did the only thing I could see to do. I parked my bag, walked quietly out of the house, and went to him. (Continued on page 45)



WORKING IN NITERIES. June likes to dance at the edge of stage and perform for each customer individually. "Night club work is exciting," she notes. "It offers more of a challenge than anything I've done." She started in chorus line in St. Louis theater.



THEATRICAL, lug inherited from late aunt, Jean Harlow, has infected June who likes to travel on road and see her name in lights in front of theaters.

BILL HALEY:



BILL HALEY beats out tune on his guitar while saxophonist curls up on floor to blow at one of his rock 'n' roll concerts.

HIGH PRIEST OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

While do-gooders shout he's fulfilling sex urges with R & R cult, Bill insists he just provides fun for youngsters.

By Leonard Bennett

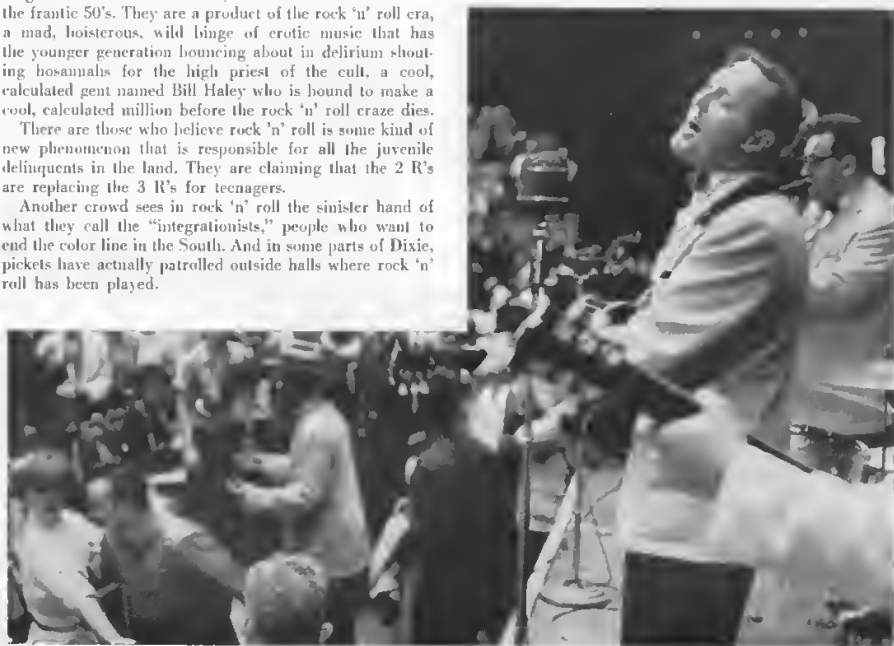
WHAT "23 skiddoo" and "Oh you kid" were to the roaring 20's, such expressions as "See you later, alligator" and "After a while, crocodile" have become to the frantic 50's. They are a product of the rock 'n' roll craze, a mad, hoisterous, wild lunge of erotic music that has the younger generation bouncing about in delirium shouting hosannahs for the high priest of the cult, a cool, calculated gent named Bill Haley who is bound to make a cool, calculated million before the rock 'n' roll craze dies.

There are those who believe rock 'n' roll is some kind of new phenomenon that is responsible for all the juvenile delinquents in the land. They are claiming that the 2 R's are replacing the 3 R's for teenagers.

Another crowd sees in rock 'n' roll the sinister hand of what they call the "integrationists," people who want to end the color line in the South. And in some parts of Dixie, pickets have actually patrolled outside halls where rock 'n' roll has been played.



VARIED REACTIONS OF GIRL FANS to R & R is seen in these two girls, one almost about to cry and other shouting and laughing hysterically in response to one of Bill Haley's hot tunes.





SPIT CURL is cultivated by Bill Haley for concert appearances. Suits which he changes between numbers are laid out on table in his dressing room (right). Tastes are conservative.



WILD ANTICS OF HALEY unit brought down wrath of Miami city censor, which blasted R & R at concert as "worn wiggle."

But the sane, sober musicologists who follow the history of rhythm state very simply that rock 'n' roll is no more and no less than what it sounds like—good music. Actually its ancestry goes back through varying schools of jazz beginning with Dixieland and tracing its way through swing, lbrap and roud. If anything, rock 'n' roll is basically a graduate school of swing with the same fundamental beat and even Bill Haley might admit that in private.

But as the high priest of R & R, Haley refuses to talk much about his art; rather he practices what he won't preach. And as a practitioner of R & R, Haley is doing quite well, thank you.

In only two years time the Haley aggregation called the Comets has sold more than 3,000,000 records. Today R & R is the No. 1 music form in the land. Tin Pan Alley analysts admit, in terms of record sales, and will likely go on being successful for at least another year.

Bill Haley is neither dazed nor even surprised that his records far outsell Sinatra's, Como's, Shore's and Stafford's, or that he and his gang, when they make personal appearances, are the hottest item in the music world today. Their "See You Later, Alligator" went over the 1,000,000 platter marker in less than two months. "Crazy, Man, Crazy," and "Shake, Rattle and Roll" also hit a million sales, and "Rock Around The Clock" passed two million.

They play to stumblers when they unleash their manic energy in theaters, night clubs, auditoriums and drive-ins. Their second movie for Columbia Pictures, "Rock Around The Clock," was shot in no time at all and at a ridiculously low budget, but played 300 cities and broke box office records in snber cities like Denver, Seattle, and Omaha. They were offered \$15,000, plus transportation costs for themselves and their families, to play 15 days in Australia. It's been estimated that, if they wished, they could work 30 weeks out of every 14. Their recording company, Decca, can't get their discs mailed to distributors fast enough.

What's made this outfit as big as it is? Professionals in the pop field have debated it, and (Continued on page 51)



LOOKING LIKE SOCIETY GIRL in clothes or just draped in fox fur piece, Brandy Martin proves a class performer wherever she strips.

SOCIALITE

STRIPPER...

Brandy Martin emerged from same society set as Grace Kelly to become burlesque exotic.

By Arch Ayres



MINK STOLE is part of costume on stage and off.





RELAXING BETWEEN SHOWS, Brandy displays charm that has made her Harold Minsky's choice as one of top strippers.



ARISTOCRATIC CARRIAGE is maintained by Brandy, even when wearing flimsy lingerie. She is well-proportioned! 37-23-35.



DRESSED IN LAVISH GOWN, Brandy starts her act with sedate walk around stage to soft music. She often works in Miami.

BECAUSE her parents are conspicuously prominent Philadelphia socialites, Brandy Martin's name is as real as a twelve-dollar bill. But that's the only phony thing about this dignified ball of sex-stoked fire who, in just the past year, has become one of the hottest items in burlesque—a strip teaser with a high society background.

Brandy was about as socially prepared to become a professional stripper as Elvis Presley was primed to study under a Rhodes scholarship. Born into wealth, Brandy's parents moved her from New York to Philadelphia when she was four years old.

"Our first house there had just about everything but a moat," Brandy recalls now. "It was enormous—ornate, high and wide, quite beautiful and a little frightening. I was privately tutored till I was twelve years old, then my parents enrolled me in a private school in New Jersey. I must have been about sixteen or seventeen before it really occurred to me that there might be girls my own age somewhere in the world who didn't have all the material comforts they wanted."

Living on the Main Line, however, did give Brandy the basic essentials of the exotic number that she does currently on the burlesque circuit. She has that evasive thing



DROPPING SOPHISTICATION, Brandy also drops her gown and becomes an uninhibited stripper whose bumps rate with the best.

called class when she starts removing her clothes. Tall and perfectly proportioned at 37-23-35, Brandy performs the usual physical gyrations that are the tricks of her current trade but leaves the feeling that somehow or other she's different. And certainly she is.

This Philadelphia story has a happy ending but it was not that story at the start.

The girl who now bumps and grinds out a living confesses she never felt quite relaxed about making a social stir with that silver spoon which had been born in her mouth. Not unlike Grace Kelly's father Jack, who'd started life as a laborer and had worked for his millions, Brandy's father had been poor and had made a fortune within a little more than a year by parlaying some borrowed money into a stock and bond empire. The Martins (as Brandy asks us to call them here) had as much or more money than their Pennsylvania neighbors, but they were not fully brought into the blue book category until Brandy's industrious mother took over and vowed that her daughter was not going to be snubbed by the other families of wealth simply because Papa—like Jack Kelly—had not inherited his aristocracy.

Determined that Brandy would (Continued on page 46)





"Amazing rhythm haven't they?"

glamour gab

By Morton Cooper

FOREIGN COMMUNIQUE. Jennie Lee, just back from the Orient, reports that peckers there have no talent and little to show. She told a newsmen in Tokyo: "They don't tease correctly. They just come out on stage and say here it is." Between humps Jennie is trying to organize an exotics dancers' softball team. . . . The most popular belly-rina in Egypt is a gal named Badia, whom American impresarios have been trying to import. Badia who performs with her own troupe of navel aralemirians, each of whom she personally trained, insists she's happy where she's doing her belly rolls now. . . . By latest count there are now 112 strippers operating in Paris. Perhaps the oldest number, in Paris or anywhere else, is the gal who comes out dressed in wilow's black and proceeds to unpeel to funeral music. . . .

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TV TOPICS. NBC has long had a ban on anything resembling humps and grinds on its television network but Elvis Presley has been getting away with it in a variety of shows. However, the fuhly-duddies finally caught up with him after he appeared on the Milton Berle show. Elvis has been told to keep pelvis under control under TV cameras or else he'll be banned. . . . One New York newspaper critic wrote after Presley's TV show: "Barlesque bombshell Georgia Southern really deserves equal time to reply in gyrating kind." . . . Walter Winchell will have a night club of his own on television this Fall. If he on the NBC network and roasts of top acts from show business that the columnist himself will pick. . . .

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SCREEN STUFF. For the first time, Hollywood film production code has okayed nudes in a movie. The arty picture, "The Naked Eye," is about the art of photography and includes extensive scenes of total nudity, some of them by internationally famous photog Edward Weston. . . . Minneapolis movie operators have come up with a new gimmick to attract customers. Because the local newspapers have been so sensitive in censoring

movie ads that feature sex, the local humpers have gone out of their way to advertise their films as for adults only. The result has been a big increase in business. . . . Cloe Monroe, who has spent most of her adult life playing a dumb blonde in the movies, has finally decided she's had enough. She's kissed off Columbia Pictures and issued this declaration of independence: "A blonde has to be a lot smarter than a brunette because she has to go through life proving how dumb she isn't." . . . Two Broadway musicals are set for filming. The long delayed "Can Can" will star Danny Kaye and Maurice Chevalier. . . . MGM is doing "Silk Stockings," also by Cole Porter, with Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse. . . .

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PITCHAWLING. Comir Morey Amsterdam, who says he wrote "Run and Coca Cola" ("And I've got the law suits to prove it") is currently killing nitryr amblers with his impersonation of James Cagney—all in Yiddish. . . . Paramus, N.J.'s Steak Pit will serve only two Pernuts to a customer. It seems the liquor not only sends you in loopyland fast but its taste is a sex stimulant. And quite legal, too. . . . Nat King Cole opens at the Coconut

Grove in Los Angeles on Sept. 5 for three weeks—a first for him. Days, he's co-star with Lana Turner and Van Johnson in a Ben Hecht picture at MGM. . . . Club Heights in Manhattan, now picking up, became suddenly and unaccountably had this Spring. The only time the ropes were up was when two cafe bosses hanged themselves. . . . Out in Las Vegas they're making a new claim for slot machines: it's the only thing that can stand with its back to the wall and defy the whole world.

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RECORD NOW. The Crewcuts, hotter than their records not only here in the States but also on South Africa juke boxes, have been signed for personal appearance early in 1957 when that city celebrates its 70th anniversary. . . . Remember Arthur Tracy, The Street Singer? With \$5,000,000 from real estate, he's gone from singing on streets to buying streets. He's recording again, now for Columbia—this time as a hobby. . . . "Ella Fitzgerald Sings The Cole Porter Songbook" tops the sales of anything Ella's done yet and is expected to outsell all other record albums in 1956. . . .

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HUMP BANTED. Maybe it's a counter-movement to the increasing number of kingsize strippers in burly. Now there's a midgt pecker unveiling around the circuit. She's a Mexican gal named Almedrita, who's just about waist high to the average man or woman for that matter (see photo). . . . Evelyn West is now booked solid for the next ten months, an unheralded feat among the strip set. . . . From Minsky's third row center, Rita Grable is a ringer for Monroe. . . . The most libelous statement yet comes from a Nevada critic who suggested that tall, torrid Betty Howard does not have much upstairs. Our official answer: Buddy, have you looked at her stairway lately? . . . Pert Julie Gibson of the Wdgie in Philadelphia, is the late prefer to turn legit. She's now finishing a season of summer stock, having established a box office record as the native girl in that creaky perennial, "White Cargo."



THE WORLD'S RAWEST BURLESQUE SHOW

(Continued from page 22)

lesque, French Folies Bergere, Cuban humor, Latin dance and stag parties the world around.

The curtain, obviously a holdover from the decades-past Chinese drama, opens to reveal a stage filled with girls. Tall, short, skinny, fat, light, dark, they pose on a series of platforms, modestly attired in shorts and bras.

The orchestra swings into a fast rhumba. The girls break their poses, form a chorus line and advance, smiling, to the stage apron. Three they demurely reach behind, unto a snap and doff their bras, dangling them enticingly as they two-step back to the rear of the stage.

With a tremendous fanfare from the orchestra, the curtain sweeps shut. The orchestra begins another tune. The curtain re-opens, to discover the girls, now nude, each covering herself modestly with a parasol. Once again they advance, twirling the parasol, and doing a series of side-step maneuvers that parody the Radio City chorus line. Then, suddenly, the lovelies all fold up their parasols and stand, completely revealed.

Blackout. Fanfare. Curtain.

This sort of display alternates through the show with three other main attractions. Of these, the sexiest is doubtless the series of semi-apache dances done by Conchita Lopez and Alfred Ruener. The pair whirl around the stage while Romero systematically strips the fair Conchita to G-string and bra. Then, in a solo bit, she finishes stripping altogether.

Blackout. Fanfare. Curtain.

Occasionally, as an encore, the lights and curtain come up to reveal the many-shaped chorines in another nude tableau for an instant.

Third on the bill is one of a series of blackout skits which are almost impossible for the tourist to understand, but throw the native audience into convulsions of laughter. Almost any French, American or Cuban work that can be cut and edited to make a sex "point" is grist for arranger Antonio Lopez.

Cuckoldry, adultery, a boy's first visit to a bawdy house, fairydom, and the amorous problems of old age are typical themes. All of the playlets are liberally interlarded with topical references, colloquial all-lit wisecracks. Frequently the players, who dumble, triple, and even quadruple in roles through the evening, don the makeup of famous screen or television stars.

Typical of the humor is a popular skit involving a boy and a girl in a restaurant. The two sit at a bare table, the waiter appears and pulls a pair of menus from his pocket.

The boy asks where the tableware is. With-out a word, the waiter pulls knives, forks, spoons, napkins out of his pocket and sets the table. After some discussion of the menu, the girl orders coffee. Out comes a cup and a pot and the coffee is poured. Salt and pepper? Si, senor, right here in the hip pocket. Sugar? Yep, in a bottle from the jacket breast pocket.

Where, then, asks the girl, is the cream? The waiter leaves nothing to the imagination in answering that one.

Competing with the live entertainment are the interludes of stag movies, shown on a screen which drops in front of the main cur-

tain. There, flickering dimly before the hundreds of upturned faces, appear some of the most prodigious physical endowments in the world, with graphic demonstrations of their use.

"This is probably the only public place in the world where such movies are shown," says Garcia. "So do not describe them in detail, for it would only cause difficulty."

Fearful that this fact may reflect on his native land, Garcia is quick to point out that none of the films are of domestic manufacture. "We obtain them from all over the world—New York, Paris, and Mexico City," he says.

Keeping a show on the boards is a grueling task for the staff and company of the Shanghai, he says. "We change the show every day." The three-day schedule of performances is preceded by a full morning of rehearsals, in which the cast gets the next day's skits and dancers in mind. To maintain the schedule calls for a company of

60 girls and a dozen men. In any one show, at least a dozen chorines, one or two principal dancers, and a half-dozen men may be involved.

"It is a difficult task, but we have never missed a performance in the 21 years we have been operating—except, of course, for revolutions," says Garcia.

Garcia says that the theater has been so successful lately, that plans are under way for construction of a new, modern house in another part of town.

"When the Folies Bergere played the Banguita theater here earlier this year," he says, "they jammed the house even though it is the world's largest theater in capacity."

"A good Havana burlesque will stay out of the red as easily as a bad one, and we feel that nothing is too good for our customers. When they come expecting to see an artistic performance, we will give it to them."

The Shanghai is not without some problems. Garcia complains that showgirls are not easy to find. He says: "Ours is a small country and there are not many girls who are willing to appear naked."

*



"We'll complain about your food later—my dish is an' right now!"

I STRIPPED AT 16

(Continued from page 35)

The lounge had a marquee on the front, and the manager promised to put my name on it if I would do a strip act. I won't tell who he was because he knew how old I was, and he revered up for me. I suppose you could say I owe my career to him.

Anyhow, I asked him what I would have to do, and he said: "Honey, all you have to do is get up there and take it off, and when it's off, then shake what's left."

I decided that would be kind of like dancing, which I'd always wanted to do, and maybe I could work into something better later on, so I took him up on it.

I was just two weeks past my 16th birthday.

I suppose that some people's eyebrows will disappear right into their hairlines when they read what I've just written.

Before they got too alarmed, I'd like to say something about show business of any kind, including the stripper circuit.

In some ways, we show people are funny folk. We work when most people are having a good time, and we sleep or have our fun while they're working. We travel a lot, and the rush and tension of showtime and touring give us a kind of hectic outlook on life. But just because we are different, it doesn't mean we aren't human. In fact, if you ask me, I think a lot of show people are more filled with human kindness and brotherly love than a lot of the people who look down on them as kind of freaks.

And, in their own way, they are just as moral.

That's what I found when I started working. The boss wouldn't let me mix with the customers, although I was willing, partly because I didn't know what it was all about, and partly because I wanted to make a good impression on my first job.

And the other entertainers were careful to see to it that no one ever suggested a thing to me that was improper or stage. Just because a girl takes her clothes off in front of people, it doesn't mean she wants to or is willing to do it anywhere and anytime.

Everyone wanted to see I didn't get hurt that way.

But in spite of this, my start wasn't easy. From the first, I met with the same kind of jealousy from older performers that I have met ever since.

There have been some wonderful people who are very dear to me for kindnesses they have done. Carrie Finnell, who calls me her "little baby doll," and Shiela "The Peeler" Ryan are two. But most of the older girls gave me the cold shoulder.

Even if I wasn't the beauty that my Aunt Jean was, I was still attractive enough to be entertaining with my clothes off. Maybe some of them felt the threat in my youth.

I might say that girls today who start in stripping have it a lot easier than I did. They often get good training—I had none but what I'd given myself in those bedroom practice sessions.

They also get good pay. Today a starting girl gets \$75 or \$100 a week, while only two and a half years ago I started at \$35 a week.

Now however, I can command \$100 a week, while girls who are just starting at the same age, get only the starting pay. I am happy that my apprenticeship is over. Before

her salary can start to climb, a girl must learn a lot and I'm glad I did it before I reached 18.

One of my first and most important lessons came in Florida, where I went shortly after I started stripping. I was working down on the keys, when one night the manager came backstage after the show to tell me: "June, you ought to go back to St. Louis. You aren't ever going to get anywhere because all you can do is shake."

What he said was partly true. It was easy for me to shake, because I was so plump, and I did it most of the time.

"What people want," he told me, "is to see something shake that means something to them. Fat doesn't mean a thing, and unless you take off some of that stuff and get some new gimmicks into your act, you're going to get nowhere."

That started me on a diet kick that almost killed me.

In less than three months I dropped from 155 to 125 pounds. I did it by eating practically nothing: coffee and toast for breakfast, juice and salad for lunch, cottage cheese at night—and lots of exercise.

But to my great joy and surprise, my resemblance to Aunt Jean began to come back.

This was proven one day when some noisy neighbor, apparently annoyed at the sexy gymnastics I used to do in my back yard—I had a little cottage near Miami at the time, because I was working there—called the police.

I was busy doing the "bicycle" exercise with my legs in the air when the squad car came up. Two big policemen got out and came around to the yard, and explained they had come because of a complaint of indecent exposure.

I stood up in my bikini suit and looked them straight in the eye and said: "I am a professional entertainer and I am doing my exercises. I do them every day and they are necessary to keep my job. Would you arrest an honest working girl for taking care of the tools of her trade?"

They just stood there and looked for a minute. Then one of them blushed and said:

"Well, I guess that's right." He and his buddy went away, but I noticed they drove past the house in the afternoon a good deal more often after that.

Indecent exposure indeed. I wonder what that neighbor would have said if she saw me at work!

There are many people who think that strippers must become immoral because they take their clothes off and often drink with the customers afterward. Let me tell you how I handled this problem when I first came up against it in New Orleans.

"You'll have to mix with the customers," my new boss said.

"But I don't drink," I protested.

"You, my sweet," he answered, "will learn."

I don't claim to have any great brain, any more than I claim to have a great talent. I just have a beautiful body and long platinum blonde hair. So it was easy for me to figure a way out of this one. I would be a real "dumb blonde."

It wasn't hard for me to put it on a little,

and be real dumb. This made it possible for me to just ignore any passes I didn't like. If a man had his hand on my knee, I'd admire the setting in his ring, or the shape of his fingers. I was too "dumb" to get the pitch.

When drinks came, I was even dumber.

I would look at a bottle of champagne. I never drink anything but champagne when I'm working—and say: "This is terrible. We don't want to drink that stuff."

With that, I'd turn the bottle upside down in the ice bucket, and let it empty. The customer would be so surprised that he wouldn't know what to do until it was too late. Then I'd smile prettily at him. He couldn't be mad.

Sometimes when the second bottle came, I'd look at it, and say it wasn't any good either, and I'd throw it on the floor.

They'd mostly just look aghast, and say, "That's my baby. Beautiful, but oh, so dumb."

When I had to drink, I'd mostly just empty the glass on the floor while the customer wasn't looking. I'd go home sober, and the boss would be happy because I'd have used up more liquor than any two girls could drink. It got so that some of the rich customers used to come in and buy me drinks just to see what I'd do. They said it was worth it to lose the money.

So I don't think my early start has had any effect on my morals at all. I'm really a homebody, and at the moment I'm very much involved with Russ DiMaggio, youngest of the famous baseball brothers. I wouldn't lie, if my morals were bad.

Meanwhile, my career is going along just fine. I hope I'll be able to fill my Aunt Jean's shoes before long. Don't get me wrong. I don't want to ride on her fame. I want to be an individual and reach stardom on my own merits.

But there is another actress whose name I'd rather not mention who has been called "the second Jean Harlow," and has made a lot out of it. This burns me up. I think if anyone is going to be the second Jean Harlow, it should be me. After all, blond is thicker than water, and while I don't think anyone could top Aunt Jean, I feel that I can come closer.

My measurements are almost exactly hers—37-23-35; my eyes and hair are the same color; and I'm within a half inch of her height. And I think by the time I am 23—the age at which my Aunt Jean entered movies—I will be a seasoned performer and ready to do the same kind of job.

Meanwhile, I am going to do the best I know how in the burlesque field. A lot of famous performers have come from it. I realize it isn't exactly the halcyon career I dreamed of when I was a kid. But when I come on stage with my rose-red costume, and a big basket of American Beauty roses to throw to the audience, the applause is wonderful. And there's no more wonderful sound in the world.

Show business is show business, and now that I'm in it, I don't think it matters much how I got here. At least I didn't have to do any favors for any producers, if you know what I mean.

And the best years of my life—and my career—are still ahead of me. *

SOCIALITE STRIPPER

(Continued from page 41)

enter the debutante world. Mrs. Martin saw to it that her beautiful youngster was given just about every private lesson a girl could have and still have time to sleep and catch an occasional meal. She was taught ballet, arolatics, piano, violin, singing, tap dancing, elocution and, of paramount importance to Mrs. Martin, pulse, posture, and the social graces.

With a complete set of instructions memorized, Brandy obediently found herself in the whirlpool of debauchery by the time she was 17. Her awkward-kinniness had given way to the swivel lines she has today, six years later. She remarks now, "Mother had her heart set on my getting into the Four Hundred and somehow it didn't seem sane to tell her I'd have been just as satisfied working to make enough to pay for a room of my own in New York, just as long as I could be near show business. Daddy sort of understood that I was never very happy in this social-climbing stuff, but he didn't do much about it. He was away from home on business a great deal of the time anyway."

Playing the social register rule consisted chiefly of attending and giving parties for the children of the rich, of dancing, riding, sailing, and keeping company with boys who had what Brandy benignly called woolen personalities. She finally decided enough was enough on the evening she was told, second hand, that she was engaged to be married.

"That was pretty close to the last straw," she says. "It was something smack out of the dark ages, where marriages were arranged without the girl's even knowing about it. I came back to Philadelphia after a weekend in Manhattan where I'd been dating a boy who was just starting out in television, and I was given to understand that a party was to be held in a week to honor the engagement of myself and a fellow I'd seen—usually in a crowd—about ten times. His parents were high in Pennsylvania society. They were awfully well to do, and they and my mother put their heads together and decided it would be a happy match."

"That did it. I packed only a few things and ran to New York."

There was a period of tension after Brandy arrived in Gotham. Stubbhorn, desperate to be independent, she had few friends in the city, fewer contacts. She reviewed the mostly useless lessons she'd been taught by the endless stream of tutors and agreed with one friend that she did, in fact, have what it might take to be an aerobatic dancer. Still with no clear image of where she was headed, she went after bookings and found work. From aerobatics she moved on to chorus line after chorus line and toured Europe, Mexico, Canada, Panama and the West Indies, slowly but carefully building her name. Not once did she fall back on her family for money or encouragement.

It was when she was persuaded that stripping for a living would get her the independence she'd always sought that she began to feel sure of her self. "I'd never seen a strip tease before," she remembers, "or even known much about it. But I made a point of watching some of the top names, decided

I had the shape and stage presence, and that was it. The embarrassment of taking my clothes off for agents didn't last long at all."

Not did her amateur standing. Following her very first appearance in her new career, Walter Winchell wrote, "Brandy Martin will give Lily St. Cyr competition as a stripper." That finished it, for she was besieged with offers within the next week and discovered she would choose the creamiest ones from the top.

Since then, the lusty blue-eyed beauty has been rocketing nearer and nearer to the top. In her first season at Minsky's she earned marquee billing and has already appeared at every important strip-tease in the country.

She's a quiet, serious girl who neither hides nor flaunts her family background. She has definite likes and dislikes. She dates as often as time allows, but the suave lady killer is in for a huge letdown. She likes a good conversationalist who knows

looks and paintings, but the man hatted in ego will get the instant gate.

She's a summer outdoor enthusiast who loves boating; her own inland cruiser bears her name. Between grind and hump engagements she'll see her antiquapoor or water skiing along Long Island Sound. She devours historical novels at an amazing speed. Currently her before-hours passion is photography and she's strong for the Available Light technique with her Leica M-3.

Today Brandy is riding the crest. There was a point of time in which her parents—particularly her mother—were convinced that having a stripper as a daughter was akin to having a werewolf in the family, but they have since contented themselves with accepting her wishes, maybe because for the first time in her life Brandy is doing exactly what she wants to do.

"It's funny," Brandy says, "to remember how Mother resented it so hard on having me learn how to use my body gracefully. If she'd only known I'd be taking that education in time and become a disaster with it, I'm pretty sure she would've hired a tutor to teach me bricklaying instead." *

ARE EUROPEAN SINGERS SEXIER?

(Continued from page 13)

and turns around, that the south of her is also a decided asset. She interrupts the melody now and then to give out an exciting growl, low and guttural. Her sense of humor is rich unburdened. She is an accomplished artist with her duple entire saigs.

Away from the microphone her zesty love for life is still as evident. She's healthy and outbraving in her *joie de vivre*. While there's a lot of comedy in her, she's not a Martha Raye, for instance. As she quips, she seems to be building over with all the physical aspects of youth; you can't escape the feeling that she can be touched off easily, that her sexiness is every hit as genuine as her wit.

Within her full schedule, Monique finds time for dates, and has been escorted by the Marquis of Milford-Haven, Franchot Tone, Prince Christian of Hanover and Rex Harrison. Her ideas for good dates are fairly catholic: she likes theater, dancing, and dinner at Twenty-One, but on impulse will enjoy donning blue jeans and a sweater (a sight no student of shapeliness should miss) and riding down to Eddie Condon's the Village Vanguard, or the Bohemian to hear mountain-moving jazz. She's definite in her pronouncements of what an eligible man should have:

"Most importantly, he shouldn't have debts. He doesn't have to be dark or have hulging biceps, necessarily. But if he isn't my kind of man to look at, he should at least be my kind of millions."

Monique's first break in show business came when the late John Murray Anderson, that astute showman, was casting pretty and well-developed girls for his Broadway production of "Almanac," a new seasons lack. His attention was riveted to the tall doll from Brussels whose face seemed so flawless and whose figure seemed so impressively perfect, that he talked with her for only three minutes and then signed her on the spot. It didn't matter that her singing voice (which she admitted to Anderson was "very small but very unpleasant") would never threaten the likes of Shore or Staf-

ford, or that her acting talents wouldn't ever challenge the Misses Hayles or Barrymore. Monique was instantly beautiful. Anderson watched her bring her haughty grandeur across a stage and knew she had an immense future.

He was right. Now-humble Monique, who until "Almanac" had needed with fame chiefly as the villainess in a Tarzan movie and as a TV foil to Abbott and Costello, is today the darling of newspaper columnists who can always count on caustic and provocative quotes from her, and of stage and supper club audiences who feel an immediate rapport with her when she steps before them to sing or clown. Since her Broadway debut her rise has been little short of Monique-terrific. Her two-week engagement stretched to five at the elegant Maisonette in New York. She had holdover engagements at the Ritz Carlton in Montreal, Chez Gerard in Quebec City, the Thunderbird in Las Vegas, the Chase's Starlight Roof in St. Louis, and the Mocambo in Hollywood—wherein she luxuriously belted out naughty numbers such as "If I Could Tell You In English What I Think Of You In French." She has a soon-toe LP record album on the Request label called "Monique At The Maisonette."

Show business was not Monique's original ambition. The luscious Monique first came to the United States as an exchange student and studied law at New York University. She had dabbled in theatrics in Europe, having appeared in Brussels' famed "1900 Revue" in 1916 at the age of 15, but for the most part ignored the offers of Belgian producers who winced at the thought of all that publicity being devoured in Barrowesque leanings.

Her interest in law dissolved though in 1919 when she met and married an American engineer. When that marriage swiftly fizzled, she left both him and this country to return to Europe, where she was instantly spied by Italian director Vittorio DiSica ("Bicycle Thief") in the bulby of the Ex-

celior Hotel in Rome. DiSica, whose genius is matched only by his impulsiveness, asked Monique if she had ever been in the movies. She said no and, in fact, had no particular ambitions in that direction. The director insisted that she meet him the next day; within a month she was playing a part in his "Tomorrow Is Too Late"—the film which also introduced Pier Angeli.

"Tomorrow" was exported to America on a wave of heavy publicity, and Monique, cited by critics for her exquisite beauty, was caught in that wave and brought back here.

She married again, this time to Kurt Pruniger, president of Muzak canned music, and while she waited for the movie offers to start pouring forth, she contented herself with the plush penthouse life in the cashier section of New York's East Side. For no reason she can sensibly explain today, she enrolled at Columbia University and studied philo-sophy and Egyptology. "I happened to see the name 'Egyptology' in the university brochure," she remarks, "and it sounded like such a pretty word."

Around the time her second marriage found itself on its last legs, television had become a mighty medium, and Monique VanVouren entered it, with good luck. Producer Sol Lesser happened to see her wiggling somewhere between Bud Abbott and Lou Costello on the Cagney Comedy Hour and signed her to appear with Lex Barker in a saga called "Tarzan and the She-Devil."

Asked what role she played, Monique answered, "I didn't play Tarzan."

After what she refers to as "that very amusing job" (and it's difficult to believe that even a herd of elephants could flatten her), Monique returned to New York and television. With Tarzan behind her, Monique embarked on her new career as *chanteuse* and proved once again that when it comes to projecting sex, the European gals have what it takes—even if it's not a singing voice. She is the embodiment of the doctrine that European singers are sexier than our home-grown breed. *

TROPICS CLUB

(Continued from page 18)

His favorite act is Donna, his young and attractive wife who, when she is not at home minding their daughter, swimming pool, Thunderbird and Cadillac, plays the Elveto-cord and sings light opera at the Tropics.

There has been the rumor, occasionally verified in certain parts of the country, that night club stripping is on the way out. Asked about it, Warren St. Thomas said, "I think it's done for if enough customers are convinced that the strip is presented for the sole purpose of taking their money away from them. If a patron's drinks are watered while he's watching the stage, and if the girls are hired not so much to take their riddles off as to romance him into spending money on them later on at the bar, then he's a jerk naturally, for allowing the whole institution to prosper."

"But we don't bother with 'mixing' at the Tropics, and we always give a customer his money's worth. As long as there's an interest in class stripping, in an atmosphere of class, there'll be the Tropics."

The countless numbers of customers who pour in night after night would seem to back this up. *

RESTAURANT OF THE MONTH

The Lesters

THE ONLY really authentic Creole restaurant north of New Orleans, the Lesters, is 23 miles from Times Square at 2000 Long Beach Road in Island Park, Long Island. Its menu is comprised solely of French Creole dishes. Guests never take one away as a souvenir for they are six feet tall, somewhat bulky to conceal under a jacket.

The exterior view is eye-catching and appealing. The dainty lure of iron over the flower-decked balcony is decorative, a touch of the French from New Orleans. The Italian Rose Garden is alluring and fragrant and the gay colors of this large citadel of calories literally pulls in clients.

The Family Dining Room is gracious. The antique copper collection has a soft sheen and the oil paintings on the walls, hand-painted trays, collector's items, good luck candle arbors of the Castle of Santa Cecilia, items collected on world tours of the owners, serve to supply the decor of this popular room. It makes dining a time for relaxation, for the enjoyment of fine Creole food.

There's the Supper Club Room, where the walls are velvety-black, the chandeliers a study in gold and crystal and the seats comfortable. This is for leisurely dining, a deluxe atmosphere that literally calls for champagne, lots of it!

The Sunken Bar is memorable. There is a friendly fireplace at one end and the atmosphere is subdued but enormously cheerful. You sample from an endless array of hors d'oeuvre trays, and if you miss the remoulade dip, you have overlooked something indescribably delightful and stimulating.

Lester Sernay, handsome and distinguished, presides in the large and busy kitchen, personally inspects every dish that is sent to a customer. If it fails to pass his critical inspection, someone gets shirted in no uncertain terms.

An ex-Army man, Lester knows the words and the music. He was with General Patton, got badly messed up by an exploding shell that did unpleasant things to his legs, hospitalized him for a long time. He used the words then, just as he can now. He has a great affection for the guests, many of whom have been steady and enthusiastic guests since the restaurant started. He insists that they have the best.

For them, he prepares such exotic dishes as flaming duck with wild rice and a tart cherry brandy sauce, a delightful and succulent item. The homeless capon is a thing of joy, ceremoniously served, and if your taste runs to a chateaubriand, it arrives on an oak plank, each slice juicy and red, an epicure's favorite. It's garnished with Creole rice in a ring, the center filled with sautéed mushroom caps. The Creole bouillabaisse is heartening and sustaining. The tab is reasonable—not too expensive for what you get.

The cellar is ample. If in doubt, consult Magee Sernay, the other half of the team that owns this lush establishment. She is the dynamic, charming and most hospitable hostess who makes you feel at home, hovers over your table, sees that the service is nothing less than perfect. She has a way with herbs, and the appealing flavors of the foods owe much to the herbs she grows and tends so competently.

The food is superior, the atmosphere friendly and cheerful. Naturally it attracts crowds, but a table can always be found. —HARRY BOTSFORD



Lester Sernay

ALL-AMERICAN INSTITUTION OF BOURBON

(Continued from page 26)

went their way downward in the bulk of the liquid. The slower they move, the richer the bourbon. A full-bodied bourbon appears almost oily.

The empty glass is another phase of the ceremonial ritual. The glass is emptied, permitted to stand at room temperature for an hour or so. Then the judge raises the glass and sniffs. If the true fragrance of bourbon is still strong, rich, delicate and full, it has been a quality bourbon.

The palm is yet another ritualistic phase. A few drops of the bourbon is poured on the palm and they are briskly rubbed together. Bury the nose in the palms and sniff. If the aroma and characteristic fragrance is almost visible, the Bourbon has genuine merit.

The sip is the final, most delicate of tests. The bourbon is mixed with an equal part of pure water. The judge takes a swallow, rolls it around in his mouth, savors every hidden flavor, swallows it and feels its genial warmth flow gently through his body.

This is bourbon judged critically in Kentucky.

Today's Bourbon is all bottled, a method that came into being on the complaint of a physician. The nails-in-the-leg competitive rivalry of distillery competitors, the practice of some unscrupulous vendors of slipping a finger-length of chewing tobacco into the leg to give it a stronger flavor, had caused the doctor to cease his practice of recommending a slug of bourbon to certain of his patients. Honest distillers welcomed this new bottle trend. The government came along with tax stamps that sealed the bottles and the purchaser was given a virtual guarantee that the contents of the bottle were simon-pure. The era of filtration and trickery was ended.

Essentially, the producers of bourbon distill along a specified pattern but with delicate nuances from the farm. Otherwise all bourbons would taste alike. They don't. Selected ground corn is weighed, goes into a pastifier, is covered with limestone water, pressured at low temperatures, then driven into "mash tubs" or converters where it is blended with de-alcoholized stillage from a previous distillation and cooled.

The rice is added, when the mash cools to 112 degrees, the malt is added. The temperature is kept at 112 degrees to permit the enzymes in the malt to convert the grains into maltose-sugars, the only form in which the yeast can utilize natural grains. Thence, the materials are subjected to normal routines, and it flows through scientifically-engineered apparatus. At long last it emerges as a raw whiskey which is piped to a large receiving tank in the eastern room, out to hardening proof by the addition of sufficient demineralized water.

Next the incipient bourbon goes into the new, charred white oak barrels. The barrels are nestled in an area where there is no summer or winter. The temperature and humidity is carefully and accurately controlled, its quality is checked from time to time.

The barrel's interior is of vital importance in this business of aging bourbon. The staves and heads are made of local white

oak and are show-charred over a precisely timed and controlled burner to a desired depth. The barrels of bourbon slumber peacefully for the prescribed times at the official proof. It is then put to the standard bottling proof with distilled water before it is bottled.

The bourbon judge will tell you that the great labels in the modern family of fine Bourbons are: Ancient Age, Beam's, I. W. Harper, Jack Daniel, James E. Pepper, Kentucky Brd, Kentucky Tavern, Mr. Park, Mr. Tilford, Old Charter, Old Crow, Old Fitzgerald, Old Forester, Old Granddaddy, Old Taylor, Walker's Deluxe and Walker's Private Cellar, Virginia Gentleman, Wild Turkey and Yellowstone. He has tried them all.

If the Bourbon judge is in a genial mood, he will ask you to have a true Kentucky mint julep. And he may say disparaging things about the juleps made elsewhere, say

them gently but firmly. Watch him carefully as he prepares each separate julep—this is educational. It can be useful.

He will probably use a plain, elderly coin-silver julep mug, the traditional container. It's the same size, top to bottom. It has little in the way of decorations, aside from minor dimples that may be regarded as service stripes. He carefully removes the leaves from two sprigs of fresh mint. These are placed in the mug with 1 table-spoon of water, ½ teaspoon of powdered sugar, carefully bruised. Then a jigger of bourbon is added, the glass is filled with shaved ice. A long spoon is inserted and twisted lazily until the outside of the silver mug is covered with the white rime of frost. The only garnish is a full spray of fresh mint. As you sip with deep appreciation, your nose is literally buried in the fragrant mint.

You'd better say that it's the best mint julep ever tasted. Duck, you know! Besides, it really is superlative. The mixer deserves praise. Also, it's one way to guarantee a refill! *

MOST ELITE NIGHT CLERKS

(Continued from page 8)

tails. But once he's in or even when he's not yet in—he is at one or another of his dozens of telephones doing Stark Club business. If not engaged in running his joint, Billingsley's only other digressions are concerned with Surtledge perfume—a production offshoot of the club. Billingsley is almost antagonistic toward all other business ventures. A former real estate operator, he still has several pieces of midtown property, but he seems vaguely annoyed when called upon to negotiate the sale of any of these, or even to consider leasing them.

As to personal backgrounds, Billingsley and Perona have possibly one thing in common. Both are self-educated. Billingsley freely confesses that he had exactly four years of American grammar school education. Perona vaguely admits to elemental schooling, which in the Italy of his boyhood couldn't have been much more than four full semesters. Perona is reticent about his background, but admits that he came to this country as a youth after apprenticeships as a busboy in London and Paris restaurants. This, at least, puts Perona in the lifetime restaurant class. Not so with Billingsley. The latter family remembers his first job in Enid, Oklahoma, at the age of seven. His older brothers had given him a toy wagon. He could do with it as he liked provided he carried out one daily chore. Each day he had to cart his wagon with a covered load of "sola pop" down to the Indian reservation and sell the bottles to the Cherokees. Selling firewater to Indians was, and still is, unconstitutional. Thus, Billingsley, at seven years of age, was possibly the youngest bootlegger in our history.

Perona leans and haws about his climb up the social and speakeasy ladder. He refers openly to places he ran during prohibition. Contemporaries remember him, in the old days, as a leading light in the social affairs of the Club Sicilone, better known as the dread Mafia. During prohibition he had speaks in the West midtown streets and it was in one of these, in the long ago era when Louis Angel Firpo was here to fight Jack Dempsey, that he met Firpo and Firpo's friends. As a consequence, Perona has held

the rich and openhanded South American trade through all his years of saloon operation.

Billingsley's career took an entirely different tangent. He ran drug stores. He operated garages. He bought and sold real estate, as did his older brothers. He followed them to New York. He boasts now that he never was and is not now very "smart" but that he always had a stubborn pride in not allowing himself to fail in any undertaking. Back in 1928, two visiting friends from Oklahoma decided to get into the booze and food business. Billingsley found them a spot in West 58th street. As opening time drew near, the friends became a little nervous. They were country boys in the big town. They asked Billingsley to come in on the operation as a one-third partner. Billingsley agreed.

Sitting around the empty room that was the first of three Stark Clubs, Billingsley got more and more stultified. He would not, he decided, fail in anything as simple as the speakeasy business. He bought out one old friend and then the other. It was in the saloon business alone and to stay, although it was doubtful that he thought so at the time.

Billingsley, soon thereafter, moved his West Side speak, now fairly famous, to his first East Side location. He abandoned this spot, in East 51st Street, because "it was too much up and down stairs." With 1933 and repeal, he took a store in East 53rd Street. A series of wondrous accidents occurred. Both clubs failed. Everything fell in place for both Perona and Billingsley. However, it is doubtful that the familiar, old-fashioned success story can be applied to either of these titans of their trade.

Consider, for instance, the origin of the names each man decided upon for his own emporium. Perona pondered on such names as the Desert and the Sahara and the Sands. His decorator, meanwhile, had worked out a design of blue and white zigzag stripes for banquet and background. These reminded Perona of Morocco, for some reason, and of zebras, for yet another faulty reason. He thought of the Zebra Club and, of course,

the Morocco Club. None of his associates liked either name. At the time, there was a successful night club called El Patio. Penna vetoed it for El Morocco.

"To this day," Perona admits with wonder, "some of my oldest customers think I put the El before Morocco because the Third Avenue Elevated was just a few yards down the street."

When Billingsley was about to throw open the doors of his first West Side night club, he conferred with three captains of waiters who were yearning to desert the fabulist chop house of James "Dinty" Moore. They discussed names for the joint, considering this or that French and fancified title. Billingsley contends that for no reason at all he grabbed the Stork Club fable from out of the clear afternoon air.

"Today," he now says slowly and sadly, "I realize that I should have long since dreamed up a romantic and colorful story about the birth of the name. But I haven't. I just never did know why I picked on that name."

Perona opened his doors in 1931. El Morocco was an immediate success. It drew the class trade from the first night. It is still drawing it. Billingsley had a slightly harder row to hoe. He punched hard for more than a year, using every kind of imaginative and provocative promotional gimmick before the Stork caught fire. But when it caught fire, it fairly exploded.

For more than 20 years El Morocco and the Stork have been New York's one-two night clubs, taken in either order. For all that time they have shared the hard core of the class customer, the celebrity, and the solid rich. And today the two opinionated tycoons who run these places with iron fists and hard heads are as far apart in operational methods as they are in background and characteristics.

"We never give away anything in El Morocco," says Perona, a note of contempt for such inanity in his voice. "We feel that gifts would enmesh our customers."

Billingsley, on the other hand, will frequently ply a guest with gifts of perfume, lipstick, champagne and other favors in an amount, even at wholesale price, which would be treble or quadruple the guest's potential check.

"I did it on purpose and on plan," says Billingsley calmly. "I know what I'm doing."

So reasons each titan in his own, determined way. The only amazing part of the whole thing, of course, is that Perona and Billingsley are not dealing with a separate set of favored customers, they're basically the same set. It is also quite possible that both bonifices are dead right. Each to his own cafe, that is. It might, indeed, embarrass somebody to be plied with gifts in El Morocco, although the same somebody would be equally startled if ignored when Billingsley started loading loot on the tablecloth. It's the difference in what the same customer has been trained to expect—either nothing or a lot.

Perona is happily voluble as to his personal relationships with customers. It is probable that he thinks of himself as a humorist and wit. His rare laugh breaks out when he remembers the time Woolworth Donahue, the playboy whose antics have bored a generation of saloon and hotel keepers, crawled into the hooded roast beef

wagon and had himself pushed around from table to table one early morning. Perona, who will involuntarily scowl when any customer, no matter how famous, comes through the door in sports jacket or even light colored suit, can also gaily recall the details of the time Michael Farmer, wartime husband of Hollywood queens, insisted that the boy from the men's room bring shaving materials to his prominent table so that he could shave himself before dinner—and did same. Perona is also one of the few men alive who actually thought, and still thinks, that the sight of Max Baer, the former heavyweight champ, crawling under tables and sticking lighted matches in the shoes of friends or acquaintances—in short, applying the infuriating "hot foot" which is now blessedly out of fashion—was one of the truly hilarious comedy hits in all history.

Such impolite antics would give rival Sherman fillings-ey an immediate triple coronary thrombosis. This hawdy rough-house is, however, Penna's escape valve from his own rules, regulations and disciplinary encyclopaedias.

As the years gather on him, his personal temper seems to be cooling, but when he is younger and even more nervous he never needed a humor in any of his cafes. Twice he appeared before magistrates for personally belting out unruly or insulting customers. It is to his credit, he it noted, that in both cases the customers he belted were celebrities whose eminence would have crowded many a tougher boniface of more unsavory recall.

Self-made millionaire that he inarguably is, Perona's business methods and his financial thinking over the years also offer several unfathomable pieces to the picture puzzle of the man's character. There can be no doubt that he knows the restaurant and cafe business. He is shrewd and courageous in all his outside business dealings. Yet he rented the rooms which contain El Morocco in 1931 and, throughout the growth of the club's success, he never unshook the landlord and purchased the premises. He first rented the location for \$350 a month. Today, 21 years later, he cringes guiltily when he admits to paying \$2,500 a month. He doesn't know exactly what he'd do if the landlord decided, when his lease is up, to tear down the building and erect a skyscraper or office or apartment structure.

El Morocco runs like one of those well-lubricated and carefully integrated racing cars so close to his heart. Until his recent death, a headwaiter known to the social world as Carino stood at the entrance rope with the assurance of a Marine drill sergeant and analytical talent of a 1000 psychiatrist. Carino, like all good headwaiters, was gifted with a camera eye, total recall, and a talent even more rare: He was a genius at what the trade calls "dressing" the room. Dressing, to the trade, means spotting customers to the best possible advantage.

Why Carino did it the way he did is as unfathomable as why he called himself Carino, which was his middle monicker, instead of Frank or Becaris, which were his Christian and surnames. But, like Perona, he established a new order by breaking some of the old and outworn rules of the cafe game.

Every run-of-the-mill headwaiter, trained in the saloon-can traps of prohibition, still works by an effective, if somewhat stale,

rule of thumb put the classiest customers at the front tables. This basic philosophy was worked at El Morocco by the now-forgotten headwaiter who preceded Carino. When Carino succeeded to the cafe's rope hurdle, he had had time to study the physical qualities of El Morocco and decide it was indeed time that the old order be changed. With his analyst's eye he had seen that the best, the most romantic, the most private tables at El Morocco were not those flanking the dance floor—where service was impromptu and the dance floor show-off might easily spoil a goblet of champagne down initially's girdle—but instead were the back-curved haquette—along the wall facing the orchestra. These tables—again by the accident of design—are so fashioned that one must have almost a direct view to identify the occupants.

It is a further credit to Perona's perception that immediately he agreed with his first lieutenant. As a result, the club became the town's "best dressed" room. In Morocco it works like this: You can dance around the floor twice, gawking for famous faces, before you realize that while the woman in all the jewels at the rigside table must be wealthy, the red-haired girl talking quietly in that curved haquette is nobody else but Rita Hayworth. And you may make several rounds of the dance floor before you do a double take to assure yourself that the fellow with the baldish head, and smoking a pipe, is Bing Crosby. Or that the thin woman is the Duchess of Windsor. Et cetera. It is never easy to search for the famous at El Morocco, which makes for fascinating surprises.

"It's the sensible way, here," Perona says firmly, "because, for one thing, we have no show to watch. The best people should be made most comfortable. Anybody who wants rigside can have it, of course."

Few of the favored customers want it. Perona claims that he has no rules of admittance or rejection, that over the years he has built an atmosphere which, almost at the door, discourages the rowdy or the low-life. He thinks his room is such a combination of beauty, dignity, and essential stability that only a hour will insist on entrance when such entrance is brewed upon. And if there is one thing the El Morocco staff—Carino trained—can recognize and then terrorize, it is a boor. El Morocco, like all famous saloons, has had its full share of brawls and fist-fights and attempted head-splitters have been either social or famous. This always takes some of the sting off—sometimes it adds just a touch of exciting glamor.

Perhaps the only truly laughable incident in Morocco's history came one night during the war. A sailor from a Spanish boat docked in town, wandered into the Champagne Room (the club's handholding and romantic off-room) and had himself an order of chicken and, as at home, a couple of bottles of good red wine. When the \$60 check was presented, the sailor copied a pauper's plea and was hauled off to night court.

"I thought from the name it was a Spanish restaurant," he told the magistrate through an interpreter. The court wearily dismissed the case.

"For sixty dollars in El Morocco," opined the learned judge, "this defendant probably didn't cheat the place out of much more than a club sandwich."

Incomewise, there can be no honest comparison between El Morocco and the Stork Club. With a lurid past, Morocco seats 400 persons in the main room and the Champagne Room. With a push and almost equal strength, Billingsley can seat a bit over 1,000 customers in the two floors which contain two complete and separate night clubs under the one title of the Stork Club. As noted, El Morocco's first customer rarely shows before 6 p.m. The Stork is open for lunch and is steadily in business until the final minute of the 1 a.m. closing deadline. It is as useless to compare the two clubs as to gross income or profits as it is to compare the daily habits of the owners.

To find Shurman Billingsley at any time during the afternoon requires merely a short wait on the telephone. One of several phone girls knows exactly whether Mr. Billingsley will be in to the caller and, if so, at exactly what time. One then appears at the Stork and announces him-elf. A day manager whips into a phone and tells the caller to please take the elevator to a numbered floor in the building.

There are eight floors in the Stork Club and every one of them, like the building itself, belongs to Billingsley. Whichever floor "the Boss" is on when he receives you, there will be a girl or a dinner-jacketed captain to meet you at the elevator and deliver you to the maestro. No matter which floor it is, a telephone will be at the maestro's elbow. He will probably be drinking clear tea or coffee and, even more probably, he will be going through papers and dictating or memorizing memoranda. At the first sign of encouragement, he will dismiss all underlings and personally conduct the visitor through a building which begins, on the ground floor, with the cure of the night club operation and ends, on the top floor, with what amounts to a small factory.

Entering through the sacred portals of the Stork Club from the common street, you are admitted to the cafe not by a man at a rope. Nothing so gauche. The Stork does not have a velvet rope. It has a chain of 18-carat gold.

The seventh floor is the most interesting. This is the Boss's own. It tells much about him. It has a couch and club chairs for visitors. There is a piano in every corner. There is a closet with twenty newly pressed "working" suits, all of a lightweight, silklike material in solid colors ranging through the light shades (for summer) to the soiler dark tints (for winter). In a tiny anteroom a tailor works several hours a day spotting and pressing the Billingsley wardrobe. A closet holds a hundred neckties on hangers. There are two ovalize bureaux filled with white shirts and underwear and socks. Dozens of conservative shoes stand like soldiers in their trees. There is also a small safe, for unimportant money, and a bigger safe for more important money. Also a money-counting machine. Just off the small room which contains these temporary money receptacles is an even smaller room with a single, monastic-like bed which the boss uses when he wants to flop over for the night.

Billingsley leads the visitor through this home away from home with his slow, almost wavering gait. His bulging head is slightly cocked to one side. His voice is characteristically hip-checked and almost tired. He has

none of Perona's enthusiasm and yet, strangely, he seems to have far deeper conviction in what he says and does. Only when he comes to the smallest of all the seventh floor rooms does his voice and manner show any real interest. This room is a small bathroom with an old-fashioned tub girdled by a reading board and various masculine cosmetics.

"See this thing here?" he demands, his voice rising slightly. "When a guy turns a loose joint this is the first thing he ought to install for himself. A bathtub. I get in that thing and pour on the water and fifteen minutes does me more good than a full night's sleep."

On matters which, over the years, he has considered and decided to his own satisfaction, he is direct and eloquent.

"I'll tell you why I give away so many presents," he said recently. "I have a definite plan. I can tell early in the night whether I'm going to have a good night or a bad night. I decide I'm going to have a bad night, maybe take a small loss. All right, I tell myself, I've got a losing night I'll make it a real one. There's a few people sitting around the tables. I send them champagne and perfume and neckties. I load them up. I was going to lose \$100 on the night, anyway. This way I lose \$800."

He paused to smile a secret smile for his own understanding only.

"So," he continued, "the customers go away. The next day he they say, 'I was in the Stork Club last night and the joint was empty?' They do not. Next day they say, 'I was in the Stork last night and Billingsley sent champagne and perfume and God knows what all. How does he do it? The place must be making a million.' That's our reason why I give presents."

There are other reasons. "I've noticed one thing," he confides. "A bar or a room may be filled. Then three or four people leave. Then somebody else leaves. It's catching. Pretty soon everybody settles out. The idea is to stop the exodus. The way to do that is to start buying drinks. That keeps them in their chairs."

There are still other reasons for the Billingsley openhandedness.

"How much does Dorothy Lamour charge for a guest appearance?" he one night asked a newspaperman.

"Oh," said the writer, "probably not less than \$5,000."

"Well," said the delighted Billingsley, "tonight she's making a guest appearance here for nothing."

The newspaperman asked how and why. "I just sent two magnus of champagne to her table," explained Shurman. "It will take Dorothy and her party more than two hours to drink that much wine."

Like many another soft-spoken and carefully contained personality, a volcano of irritability and violent ill-considered feelings thinly below the Billingsley shell. A lava of rage pours forth almost every time Billingsley feels called upon to write a note to any employer or associate about almost anything. As calm as his spoken orders and requests may be, his written complaints or grievances sound as though they came direct from the hoodlum boss of a waterfront union. The walls of the main kitchen, in the cellar of the club, are literally papered with bulletins-dux from the Boss. They are

all signed with the initials "S.B." Written on an oversize typewriter in letters almost an inch high, the missives deal with innumerable complaints and counter complaints. All have one thing in common—the salutation. The salutation goes about like this:

"God Damn It, Son of a Bitch! Blank Double Blank. Obscurity. More Obscurity. How many times have I told you that when a customer, etc., etc., etc." These missives of loving rage, to the casual eye all concerning matters of infinitesimal importance, are found in odd nooks and crannies of all floors of the club building. Recently Billingsley brought a puppy from his farm in the country, meaning to give it away to some customer who fell in love with it, and proceeded to fall in love with the pooch himself. He kept it in a secretary's office off his own suite. One afternoon the pup rowled as he reached out to caress it. Billingsley was convinced that the porter had kicked or hit the puppy. He ran for a strip of wrapping paper and sent a lieutenant scurrying for a paint brush and black ink. The resulting sign, four feet wide and stuck to the wall with tacks, read:

"God Damn It! Anybody who hits or kicks this dog I will hit or kick back, S.B."

More and more, in recent years, Billingsley spends longer hours in his suite on the seventh floor of his building. There are nights, he admits, when he won't go downstairs unless something "calls" for his presence. When he is downstairs he gives the majority of his time to the Club Room and, then, usually at Table 50 with Walter Winchell. Winchell, among other things, is probably the most underpaid press agent of all time. For years and years he has been hunting, landing and detailing the nightly happenings at the cafe. He has never made a dime from the club nor even participated in Billingsley's rare outside business ventures, although Winchell is always eager to plug these, too.

"Winchell has been my greatest friend," Billingsley says slowly. "If I ever lost him, I would lose something of great importance. I think, too, that I've been valuable to Walter. I think if anything happened to me he'd lose something valuable, too."

Billingsley contends that he does not give Winchell stories or news tips because he doesn't know a story or a news tip when he hears one. But he talks incessantly with the columnist and what he has just heard from some national or international figure rarely goes unnoticed by Winchell.

The clean-cut young American type is the type of customer Billingsley most wants. He despises the exotic, the exotic and the foreign types. He has a sort of phobia about true blue American characters. These he instinctively recognizes and accepts under the general description of "good people." The gigolo type raises his hackles and he is completely allergic to Latinos. Billingsley would far prefer to have such wholesome and honest American types as unknown Hollywood starlets or over age magazine cover girls in his saloon than he would such a suspiciously foreign celebrity as Aly Khan. Something warns him that none of the "good people" would wear their hair as long as Aly Khan or buy striped suits of such extreme cut.

An example of his attitude toward The Outsider happened a few years ago when an

old customer called him and said he wanted a table for himself and party. The party would include the Maharajah of Jaipur, one of the richest Indian princes in the world. "I don't want none of those colored men in here," said Billingsley flatly.

The customer, agitated, pointed out that the Maharajah was not only one of the world's richest men but also one of the most important royalties in the East.

"He's still colored," Billingsley insisted, ending the conversation.

It is perhaps illuminating to report that the Maharajah was taken to El Mirador where Perona practically tore the place apart trying to impress and entertain him. But, then, of course, Perona is also a "foreigner" in Billingsley's eyes. And the Maharajah was just another dark-skinned Indian. Sherman Billingsley knows a lot about Indians from his early days in Oklahoma. He works on the ancient hunter-gatherer theory that the only good Indian is a dead Indian. Sherman's only deviation from this basic philosophy is that, for him, it goes double for bur-

sign Indians who come to his spot.

In common with Morocco, the Stark is run with such careful attention that it is not a place where hilarious accidents or truly humorous incidents are apt to occur. Years ago, however, a forgotten drunk outwitted the Boss in his own lair.

Billingsley has always insisted that every male in the club wear a socially acceptable necktie. If you are an important or well-known thirder eccentric like Bing Crosby, for instance—a necktie will be loaned or even given to you. On the occasion mentioned above, a young playboy arrived without a tie. Billingsley was stern. He refused him entrance until he had gone somewhere and gotten himself a suitable necktie. The glibly youth left dutifully and returned in half an hour with a hand-sown necktie. Billingsley smiled and forgave. The inebriate external quickly, almost too quietly.

It wasn't until almost an hour later that a horrified captain reported that the playboy was gaily dancing on the Stark Club floor—in his bare feet!

*

HIGH PRIEST OF ROCK 'N' ROLL

(Continued from page 38)

the generally agreed answer goes like this: "They work like pile drivers from the second they start until they're completely drained. They're certainly not flawless musicians but they have a sense of rhythm—or at least a sense of rock and roll rhythm, which means a steady and unvarying beat. They're showmen."

"They came along at the psychological moment when teenagers were looking for a kind of jump music that would dig right in and throw the lid off their sex frustrations. The Comets played up to this, whether they're conscious of this or not. They fill the need in spite of, and make a hell of a lot of money doing it."

Haley himself steadfastly denies that the songs he and his men often have any relation to hot and heavy sex urges. Suggest this to him and he'll indignantly state that there is nothing unhealthy about R & R. He insists that "Rock Around The Clock," for instance, is not suggestive, and pledges to rewrite any lyrics which in his estimation would otherwise make for erotic allusions. "I can't understand why they write certain lyrics," he says. "The music is the main thing and it's just as easy to write acceptable words. Tunes with objectionable phrases often are banned by radio stations so, among other reasons, it would just seem good business sense not to write them that way."

Since the "Rock Around The Clock" elixir, no work has gone by without a Haley record on the best-selling lists. He turned down a \$6,000 offer to appear on a Milton Berle show because that appearance would have interfered with his vacation, and he refused a staggering offer to play the European circuit because he doesn't like to fly. But these expressions of independence haven't set him back.

He is wanted by almost every manager who owns a microphone and who has access to an audience. They know that his seven man band (two guitars and steel guitar, accordion, sax, bass, and drum) can team with Haley in their gaudy Scotch plaid jackets, mount a stage with all the excitement of a gipsy caravan, follow the hysterical

yell of "Rock!" with a full evening's concert of breathless, super-charged, unsuitable non-sensical singing and clowning, and break all previously-held box office records.

Teenagers, worshipful and obedient, whip themselves up into such a hot lathe of enthusiasm that they refuse to allow the shows to end, and will scream, demand, and beg for encore after encore.

Although the Comets' success is recent, the shy but self-assured Haley has been involved in pop music, in one form or another, all his life. Born in Highland Park, Michigan, he was making a dollar a night at the age of 13 by playing and singing at auction sales. A short time later, he learned his own hand and worked wherever he could book the group.

He left home at 15 to go out on his own. He worked in open air parks, sang and yodeled with a small band and worked with a traveling medicine show. Eventually he got a job with the Down Homers, a hillbilly outfit popular in Hartford, Connecticut, and stayed with them until he decided after a restless period of taking orders that he was not cut out to be an employee. Assertive in a quiet way, he was then and still is comfortable only in a boss-man role.

Haley later learned "Bill Haley's Saddlemen" in Chester, Pennsylvania, and as musical director of Radio Station WPVA there for six years, he worked steadily to develop new ways of presenting his country and western band in a public getting bored with the standard corn of somberness, chaps, guitars, and invocations which always began, "Wa'da, now, howdy, all yon folks out thar in Radioland."

He experimented with sounds, visual tricks, methods of better displaying his own personality and his men's. By 1951 he was ready to record. He dropped the middle-tempo heat of the country and western styles, and gradually up-tempoed along more commercial lines. He changed the name of his group from the Saddlemen to the Comets, recorded a frenzied number called "Crazy, Man, Crazy," and by 1952 was snapped up by Decca.

Although Haley and his Comets began to "shoot up" as fast and as poignantly as real comets (they scored heavily with "Shake, Rattle and Roll," their first Decca release, and with "Din, Din The Lights," "Mambo Rock," and "Bazze Dazze"), their coast-to-coast fame did not actually start to jump until last year when MGM released "The Blackboard Jungle," a B-hungry picture about juvenile delinquents which was exported to do pretty well on the second half of a movie hit. The film found everyone thought, by becoming one of Hollywood's top grossers in 1955, and in so doing, made audiences Haley conscious. His retooling of "Rock Around The Clock," which had not done especially good business in the shops, was used as background music in "Jungle."

Shortly after the film's premiere, "Rock Around The Clock" began to sell again. The last count taken shows that it has sold more than two and a half million copies.

Bill Haley is Mr. Hyde as a performer. Dr. Jekyll as a man away from the bandstand. He lives with an attractive wife and three children in a 12-room home in Boothwyn, Pennsylvania, and feels an unspoken irritation that his performing dates must keep him away from his family so often. When he is home, he works hard at playing. He is serious about boating, hunting and fishing. He lives new cars and changes Cadillacs every six months.

It places him that the Comets are as business-minded as he. With them, he has invested in a sheet metal business in Wilmington, Delaware, and plans are under way to erect a series of motels, complete with swimming pools. There is never friction between him and his musicians; jointly they own two boats which they keep at the Wildwood, N. J., inlet, and are continually trying to hold off engagements so they can live it up in the outdoors.

Haley has had disputes (none of them really serious yet) with Jolly Joyce, his booking agent, who wants him and his Comets to work steadily. Joyce can keep them working every morning, noon, and night, but lately Haley has been putting his foot down.

Certainly there won't be any noticeable slackening of record or personal appearances for some time to come. Haley, who with show-smart gimmicks and with an incredible amount of luck, rose to the top quickly, is astute and aware that R & R is not a deathless musical art, that it will fly for a time, then flutter, then die, and his aggregation will be with it. But he is ready to change.

Not long ago he said, "We have tried in our arrangements to conform to what the public wants—and not to bend the public likes and dislikes to ours. This, I think, is the major factor in our group's success."

By now he is injured and calloused to shrieks that he is misleading the younger generation. He knows that this is the perpetual shout of elders, who quickly forget that they themselves were once guilty of such insane delinquency as swallowing goldfish, drinking hooch booze and chasing off on panty raids. All the expressed fears of what our youth is coming to alight up to what medical men commonly term hardening of the arteries and Haley prefers not to worry too much about today's teenagers, whose rest for him bodes well for their future.

It's Deductible

Grey Flannel Circuit

JACK'S, 615 Sarramento (GA 1-8834) fine of the oldest eating places in town (It dates back to 1864), and a large, intimate pullitru, tycoons and thimralfol. Many of the city's political campaigns have been plotted in the smoke-filled back room. The atmosphere is simple and expensive, but when you sample the *cargots bordelaise*, *dickra saute sec*, *similar house specialties*, *prira* is no object. Dinner starts at \$3.50.

Headline Houses

Black Tie Belt

Bohemian Belt

Solid Stuff

he Kniff Heil

BALTIMORE

Night Out

Link and Pretty

BETTYE MILLS, 714 Paul Ballmore 15

Hot Stuff

CLUB LAS VEGAS, 128 Warwick [65-5-2885]. A bit off the gay white was big, burly lasses prove it's the hospital that enacts. Heaps like up for Sunday mailers at 4 pm.

56

Repeat Heavens

backstage

By Arch Ayres

ORIGIN of the strip tease is shrouded in historical obscurity and there are almost as many versions of how the strip started as there are strippers. Newest claim from France is that this year marks the 60th anniversary of strip. It seems that hark in 1896 a French gal named Charmion got the urge to peel while swinging on a trapeze in a circus. She started tossing assorted items of her costumes into the audience until she was indeed the daring young lady on the flying trapeze. Another version claims strip started later in the Folies Bergere and then there are some French who say it all began in America. But of course, the Russians have yet to be heard from in this debate.

* * *

STILL GOOD for a laugh even in her dotage, oddtimer Mae West sounded off about censors the other day. Hauled into court innumerable times during her career for offending the watchdogs of other people's morals, Mae saunteringly insists that there is need for blouses; "Why, if it wasn't for censors, there'd be more and more wickedness on the stage, and finally complete depravity. Shocking!" Shocking indeed.

* * *

SCARING CUSTOMERS is the newest gimmick being used to corral customers in West Coast strip palaces. Taking a cue from such television programs as *Vampira* as well as the Charles Addams cartoons in the New Yorker, Strip City is billing an act called "Frankenstein And His Bride" with ads that read: "Terrifying! Thrilling! Nauseating!" Among songs featured are: "Oh, What A Beautiful Mourning" and "Ghoul Of My Dreams."

* * *

AN OLD CHESTNUT was revived by actor Charles Coburn at a Mt. Sinai hospital benefit in Hollywood. He told the audience: "When I was a boy, my father said, 'Charlie, don't ever go to a burlesque show. You might see something you shouldn't see.' So I saved my money and went to a burlesque show and sure enough, I saw something I shouldn't have seen—my father."



BUSTIEST BARMAID in the nation seems to have run into Uncle Sam, who thinks that her assets make her a cabaret attraction. She is Ruth Shepler of Des Moines, Iowa, who sets anywhere from two to four glasses on her ample bosom and pours beer in them to the delight of customers (see photo). Three years ago she was hauled into court on charges of an indecent exhibition but the judge had enough good sense to dismiss the case. Now the internal revenue bureau is trying to sock her with a claim of \$4,000 in hark taxes. The revenue men insist that what she is doing is entertainment and therefore her tavern should be subject to the 20 per cent cabaret tax.

* * *

PUBLICITY for Elvis Presley gets better and better while he sings of heartbreak. Newest blast against Elvis and his magic pelvis comes from Oakland, Calif., where a policeman viewing his performance in the local Auditorium said: "If he did it in the street, we'd arrest him."

* * *

BLI/EXOSES are on the warpath in straight-laced old Boston again—this time against oriental dancers. The naughty manipulations of the Near East gals came in for some heated blasts from local censor Mary Driscoll, who claimed they were booked in some clubs as a substitute for strippers. She

warned the club owners: "We don't want stripteasers in your places shaking here and shaking there, I'm sensitive about these things and I'll get out myself and see these belly humps." Miss Driscoll was at last admission 72 years old.

* * *

TV AT YOUR TABLE is now featured at Circo's, famed Sunset Strip club in Hollywood. Its new TV Terrace furnishes a small 13-inch TV set at each table.

* * *

SEX SWITCHING is evidently still a good show business act. Newest to change allegiance from him to her is Ray Bourbon of El Paso, Texas, who has become Rae via what is claimed to be the first such operation performed in North American continent. Ray became Rae in a Mexico hospital and will strut her new personality on night club stages across the country soon.

* * *

A BUSINESSMAN who had fallen in love with a night club entertainer employed a detective agency to check up on her. He received the following report:

"The young lady has an excellent reputation, her past being without a blemish. She has many friends of good social and financial background. The only scandal that we can find against her is that she has been seen lately with a local businessman of questionable character."

* * *

MEXICO has cracked down on what little burlesque can be found in the capital. City amusement boss Adolfo Bustamante clamped a lock on the doors of the Tivoli Theater because they advertised their show as "burlesque like in Paris." Actually the show wasn't anything like Paris but the tag line was enough to get the censors started on the warpath.

* * *

DIFFERENCE between a pianist and a piano player was described by singer Pearl Bailey, who introduced her accompanist at her Waldorf opening as follows: "Mr. Phillips now is my pianist. Three years ago he was a piano player, I guess money does make a difference."

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